




KULA
MANU
2006



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Kula Manu 2006

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY HAWAII

cover art "Fire" by Cody Easterbrook

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Kula Manu 2006

Thank you, to all those who helped make the Kula Manu a success this year!

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A special thanks to those who made this possible, BYUH printing services, the library, Myrna Marler, Ned Williams, my mom, your mom... Well, it's paid off now, so a great BIG thank you to all of them. We would also like to thank all the companies that contributed materials we have utilized in production of this journal, including the makers of the pens we used and the trees that were so viciously chopped down to provide the paper this has been printed on. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts, we couldn't have done it without you.

Dedicated to the Kula Manu staff of 2007... Good luck.

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human nature

debbie frampton

the sun circles
 round and round
liquid motion
 silent sound

finite fumbling
 shadows spill
flight of fancy
 almost real

sky is tipping
 space gives birth
moon is tripping
 over earth

starlight reeling
 senses sprawl
human nature
 takes
 the
 fall. . .



Shades

Cody Easterbrook

Break Away, Beautiful

Michelle Bautista

Kite-making. It was something I anticipated every year. It was a seasonal amusement in Sasebo, Japan; engaging itself in the beginning of every school year, when the autumn winds were just right for the take off of cranes, tigers, and the occasional Buddha.

Kite-making was the same each year. There was a table that held piles of diamond-shaped rice paper with beautiful images imprinted on each of them. The next table had endless arrays of markers dumped in the middle, from Crayola to heavy duty ink, from electric blue to a random runny red. At the very end, a few Japanese men and women sat cross-legged on the floor, patiently waiting to teach us how to insert the sticks and string with a box of materials by their sides.

Being a tomboy, I always picked the dragon. The dragon was fiercer and faster than the butterflies every other girl had on their kites. "Stupid stuff." I'd tease them while sticking my tongue out in disgust at their hot pink and purple wings. I'd draw the dragon's eyes over and over again with red marker to intensify its glare. Then I'd take it to the field to fly it, treat it as if it were real, as if the string was really its leash and I was letting it pounce on anybody that got in its way. It was my dragon and my identity. The dragon was something I was so sure about, and I felt comfortable being in control of everything. I was different, and I liked that.

Autumn of my fifth grade was different, and I questioned the differences of conformity and growing up. Was there really a difference between the two? And would I be able to understand that I was not neglecting my individuality, but embracing my womanhood? That year, I had started my period and a new boy moved into the neighborhood. Then I realized that, somehow, I didn't feel like "Michelle the Tomboy" anymore. Something inside me had changed, and I felt vulnerable to it.

That year was the first time I didn't pick the dragon, and I chose to fly the pretty Geisha woman instead. I found something within her empty lines that labeled this new feeling that was growing inside me. I colored her kimono with rose and periwinkle; the softer pastels that were beginning to show in my cheeks and loss of words. I helped put on her make-up to prove to everyone she was more than just a girl and

maybe, subconsciously, to prove to the new boy and the Butterfly Society that I was bigger than my body. I handed her to a Japanese man, carefully and admiringly. He took her in his gentle hands and smiled

"The dragon took a vacation this year?" he asked. I smiled out of politeness.

"This is the first time we put her out on the table. The Lady was meant to fly," he said. I noticed the breeze picking up outside and hurried putting on the backing and string. That day the wind was unusually strong and had already taken a couple of kites to the heavens. Then I saw him, the new boy. He was standing across the field by himself. I felt as if my hair was detached from my head and my palms got sweaty. I hated this new overwhelming feeling, but my body was beginning to have a mind of its own. He was flying the Samurai. I walked over near him to fly my Lady.

"I like your kite" he said to me.

"I like yours too" I blushed. But I could hear the girls snickering behind me, with their snobby pink butterflies.

"Look, she picked a girly one this time."

"Where'd her stupid dragon go?"

"I think she has a crush on the new boy."

I was not the Tomboy anymore, but neither could I describe myself as one of those girls. What was wrong with me? Was the transition from girl to woman an experience of loneliness? I felt like the only one of my kind, a whole new species struggling for survival in the fifth grade. I was embarrassed at their snide remarks. I felt the hot tears in my eyes. I took down the Lady and ran to the bench to scribble over her snow white face and ebony hair. I wanted to hide her. But gusts of wind kept pushing her away from my hands. I used one of the scotch-tape pieces from the backing to pin down her corners, but before my pen could touch her cheeks, a bellow of air took her from me. She was carried past the top bench and over the fence. I was left to watch her lips kiss the immortal sky. I felt relieved and was glad nature had taken matters into its own hands before I could tear them with mine. The Lady could not be ignored or destroyed. She could only appear in your life and be tolerated. Wanting to be attractive and experiencing new emotions were not signs of conformity, but forms of growing up.

"Break away, beautiful," I whispered to her as her image burned into the sun, and I understood.



Fishing
Rachael Yer

Paradelle on Humanity

Kelsey Adkins

To experience emotion then attempt to explain,
To experience emotion then attempt to explain,
With color or light, notes, and words.
With color or light, notes, and words.
Explain emotion to color, experience to light,
And then with notes or words attempt.

This is humanity, the aim to express,
This is humanity, the aim to express,
Man's relationship with God, or not.
Man's relationship with God, or not.
To express man's humanity with this.
Relationship or not, God is the aim.

A rebirth leads to a misshapen pearl.
A rebirth leads to a misshapen pearl.
And from them, what it means to be human.
And from them, what it means to be human.
A human pearl and rebirth: From them what?
It leads to a means to be misshapen.

This relationship with humanity,
What it means then, to be, to not.
To explain notes or experience color,
And express words or attempt light,
With man's misshapen aim leads them to the pearl:
A Human emotion is a rebirth to and from God.

NOTE: The paradelle is one of the more demanding French fixed forms, first appearing in the langue d'oc poetry of the eleventh century. It is a poem of four six-line stanzas in which the first and second lines, as well as the third and fourth lines of the first three stanzas, must be identical. The fifth and sixth lines, which traditionally resolve these stanzas, must use all the words from the preceding lines and only those words. Similarly, the final stanza must use every word from all the preceding stanzas and only those words.



Sunrise Delicacy

Amber Hanza

Drive

Michelle Bautista

The rain outside ate up my insides. The sky sang my sad, lonely song. I sat in the front seat staring out the window, wishing it'd be like the old days where you'd pull to the side of the road and numb my lips. What happened? Why isn't it like that anymore? Times have changed and all we have are the shoeboxes labeled with our names.

I looked at your eyes focused on avoiding any eye contact with me longer than two seconds. I couldn't smell the cologne anymore. Nowadays, you smelled like the color gray – gray like the ashes left of our pictures. It was silent except for the poking of the rain against the windows and the wipers squeaking across the glass.

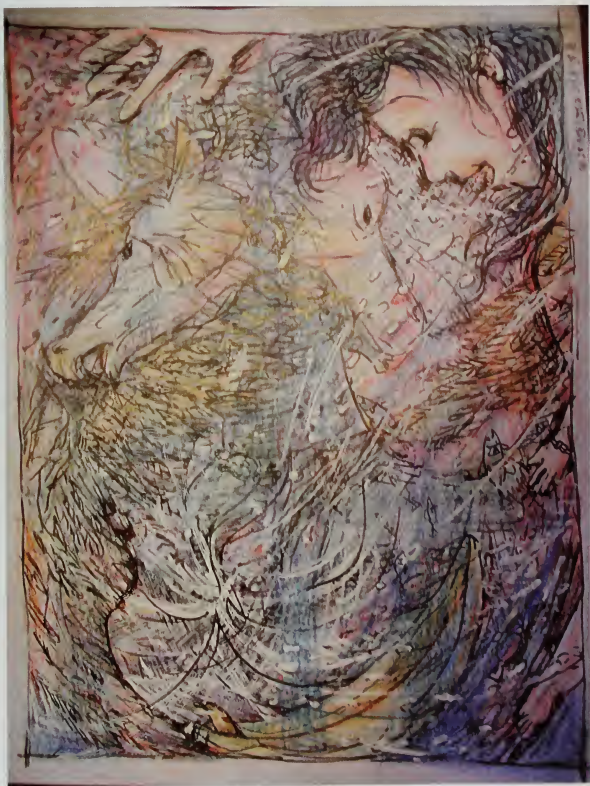
I know it's late and that I should've left a long time ago, but please take me home one more time. Then maybe you'd remember. I turned on the radio to our favorite request to forget the despair of all the things we can't undo. Through the chorus you promised me the Maybe's, and even then I believed you. But I know you and I shook my head.

Just keep driving.

Yes, just keep driving and let the radio drown out our words. This car reeks of the old you – when the old you was mine. This car is coated with the nights we sang along to radio songs, raced past city lights, and dreamed under the stars. Where have all those gone? Why do we stand where we are? Please don't tell me what went wrong; just tell me that, even at one time, it felt right. I know you felt it too.

We laughed. Not like we used to, but we laughed. Then you looked down and it killed everything again. I died again. And took off my seat belt.

Thanks for the ride.



Wiped Out
Kiyomi Hamai

Sleeping with My Sister in Our Bed

Nomingerel Ganbold

America is odd; it is considered gay to touch someone unless it is a hand shake, occasional pat, or friendly hug. I have disobeyed this rule for a long time. There are other body contacts with friendly manners like sleeping with the same sex in bed, holding hands with same sex friends in the street, or maybe even just leaning and lying beside them. Any of those mean friendliness, closeness, and an expression of 'I am here with you.' I have slept together with my sister a lot of times because no personal space exists in Mongolia, because it is always cold in Mongolia, because our family didn't have separate rooms for the sisters. Most of the time I slipped into my sister's bed, and we slept side by side. That continued until after the 1990 democratic revolution over Sukhi-Bator Square, until after I stopped watching Walt Disney, until after my breasts grew, until after Britney Spears's breakout single 'Crazy', until after high school, until after and after, and I wished it was forever, like a long numb train, heading home without station. There were connections between me and my younger sister and we established them while we slept side by side at night, breathing the same air, flesh to flesh, feeling each other's feelings and body heat for many good years.

"Actually, who am I after everything?" I asked myself that question more than ever, after I got up on another typical Saturday afternoon, searching myself. I looked at my reflection in a mirror and I saw blowzy long black hair, a low nose and wide Mongol cheekbones. Most of my 22 years were tangled up like the hair on my head. Stray papers with phone numbers, notes from classes with drawings in the column, food stained study books, piano music, unsent Hawaiian greeting cards to home, my CD collection, perfume, body lotion, eye wrinkle cream, hand lotion, quarters and pennies, Wet Shine lipstick, keys, ID's, wallet, cup, cereal, black jewelry, black tops, black jackets, black shoes, black nail polish, black dresses, everything black that could hide me in the dark sometimes, hide my feelings under black, pitiful on my work desk and wall shelves.

Am I a lost ID in the jumbled work desk? Am I a little dim star in the flat Mongol land that just hasn't been noticed? Or am I a typical sister who adores her better sister? Or another forgotten older daughter, replaced by a sister that came in one summer day? Am I a lost foal in the Gobi Desert? Or was I another undiscovered island in the Pacific? Am I an unfinished music piece, unreleased hit song, an

unknown brilliant artist? I pondered while I looked at my pretty little sister's picture on the mirror that covered my right ear, a sister I spent my childhood with.

My tall, pale, skinny, sister and I slept side by side in the twin sized bed, ate from the same pot, same food, and we were called SISTERS just like many other zillion sisters, but life no longer held us together. Even a baby bird leaves its nest someday. We were no longer sisters dressed in the same cherry dresses with green and red ribbons tied on our heads. We no longer skate on the ice together, share warm gloves with each other. Nor do we argue about dolls and lipsticks, wrestle, fight and bruise each other. We no longer sleep together and undo each other's hair. So today, as the big sister, I wear baggy jeans, headphones, a back pack, and flip-flops with sunshade, and go to a college in the Hawaiian Islands, on the other side of the world; while my dear sister wears a shiny dress, glittering blue eyeshade, lipstick with high heels, and goes to numerous dance practices and concerts with shimmering colors among shimmering people. Our lives separated under the destiny of separation while our mind settled and time passed us.

In shivery cold nights in Ulaanbaatar, while doves sat together on the naked trees, before dad and mom turned off the night lights in the living room, while gloomy street lights fell in our room through the window, while sad love songs murmured from the radio, I slipped into my sister's bed and held her warm body tight, my arms around her waist, my sister pushing her butt to my tummy. We both crawled toward each other like wolf pups to their mother, drawn by their natural instinct, sharing and protecting ourselves from the outside, from strangers, from a danger, from mosquitoes, from the chill. I brought my nose to smell her hair, her body without any fragrance. Even though our eyes, nose, lips, toes, fingers and ears were different, we had exactly the same soft brown hair. I loved her hair because there was no other resemblance to show we were sisters. Yes, we were sisters, so there was nothing to be ashamed of; no personal bubble space existed between us. Nothing fit in between us, in the souls held hands tight. I breathed her in and she breathed me in, in the covered blanket, in our small apartment, in our chaotic city, in this complicated world, every day.

Early in the morning, I cried in my daddy's car. The car was cold inside and everything there seemed somehow meaningless, shallow. The worn out leather cover on the driving wheel, the same songs crying out from the radio station, and the sad sound of the engine passed through time. Daddy's melancholy eyes stared through the distance on

the road and his grey thick lips said few words but they were loud and harsh. Daddy didn't understand us; my eyes were filled with big fat tears, bigger than my small, brown, round eyes and made them look like glass. The tears burst out down my cheeks every time I blinked my glass eyes. Frozen snow freckles blocked my view, so I made a hole with my tear stained gloves to see people, all kinds of people: happy, sad, nice, ugly, busy, homeless, drunk. Just to disturb myself, just to make sure where I was, just to believe that I was strong, just to forgive my father's unintentional outrage, just to grow up and become a better person as they say, just because I remembered my sister teasing her school principal and laughing hard together last week, I simply smiled with my mouth shut. That was all you could do when you felt down and empty and I did it even though it was hard to smile. At home, Mama was working at her old wooden work desk with the fluorescent lamp turned on, wearing the work suit that she forgot to change, forgetting to release the wrinkling of her eyebrows over her tea, forgetting to say hello and cook our dinner. I still came back to my sister's bed with red eyes, hungry stomach and sad heart.

I walked on a balcony on the third floor of our apartment with a puzzled mind while I hung wet clothes. I put my elbows on the edge, stood as if I was going to give an important speech. While I enjoyed my aloneness for a while in a busy afternoon of the day, I pondered deeply about everything I saw surrounding me. Everything I saw was a miracle; beautiful morning sunrays, birds flying away for warm weather, kids playing with dogs in the garden, all reminded me that the whole universe is calm and natural, welcoming me to a future. I saw a blood stain on the ground. I looked up to the upper floors, and then down to the ground. I knew where that stain came from; a young girl like me didn't want to live, didn't want to see the sun I am now standing below. I looked over the rail with a raw teenager's mind, just to measure how far I was from death, knowing it was far to the ground, eighteen meters away. I grieved for the girl who jumped from the top of the building yesterday morning. What was she thinking? And what was the last thought, the last flash? Was there any other life for her? Why did she jump? Her body slapped flat onto the ground, landing feet first, and then smashing her whole body in just one instant. Why, when her friends, parents, and people around her missed her? I didn't jump like that poor miserable girl, because I wasn't miserable. I wished she hadn't jumped; she was with me that day, looking at that beautiful sky. I went back to my sister's bed and undid her braided hair.

I had emergency appendix surgery when I was 16. I was scared. They cut down my stomach, my skin, took out my appendix and

showed it to me, white, wet and curly; then they sewed my skin back and released me from the surgery room. Before that, I was lying on the big tall steel desk; my arms, legs, thighs bound; naked, cold, shivering, and my heart bumping in my throat while teeth cracked loud. I came back to my sister's bed alive, but with a new scar on my belly, a wrinkled ugly scar. I was in pain but my body survived. My sister was still right beside me while it healed slowly.

We played kingdom. I played the prince and she played a princess, because our baby brother was too small to play prince. I never played a princess; maybe I never thought I was a princess. I had my sleep pants on and drew a curly mustache above my mouth while my sister wore a plastic doll crown, and her prettiest, longest sleep dress. Actually I did look like a male with my bony flat body without breasts and not too dazzling face. I only made sure my princess was lovely enough while I chose her dress, fixed her hair, and put fat lipstick on her thin lips. Then we ran and screamed all over in a room with a few boring pieces of wooden furniture with our drawings stuck on, naked Barbie, and tea sets, laying on the floor. We acted as if we were afraid of our invisible opponent stalking in the darkness, trying to steal my princess. I fought with him with my toy sword and cut off his invisible head. I guess that was a way to feel strong, brave, and heroic, like some great people. Sometimes my princess shrieked and ran away from my help almost intentionally, gladly forced by our invisible opponent. She was tired of her prince's control and care for her so she excused herself from me under the destiny of separation. It's too bad that sometimes the prince had to linger in sadness until his princess suddenly released herself and brought the kingdom back, complete.

"Shhhhhh!" "Daddy's coming, Daddy's coming! Let's hide, let's hide... quick, in the bed!" We tumbled through our bed while Dad stuck his head in our door and told us to go to sleep right away. The prince and princess couldn't sleep right away after many tough encumbrances, trials, and dramas. I whispered another new tale with a prettier princess and stronger prince in my sister's ear and didn't finish it until she fell asleep.

Birds were singing on top of my head while I lay on the ground in a forest. The bluest sky looked like paradise, like a heaven with angels, and all the good people looking at me smiling, and saying "Don't worry! We are fine!" When I breathed deeply after that, I smelled strawberries, fresh tiny original strawberries in the wild forest. For me, that was the best strawberries my memory had ever smelled and tasted. I didn't find them again anywhere. Not from the strawberry posters, not from the restaurant tables, not from the bottled jams, not from the

Island grocery stores. That summer was the dearest time in my life as I found the best strawberries I'd met, enjoying nature, wood, forest, green, heaven, my teenage life with my classmates in a summer camp. It was my own fantasy, my own paradise, my own innocent life: friendship and betrayal, girls and boys, first love and kiss, strawberries in the wood; everyday full of curiosity and discovery, everyday so new, orange sun brightened so pure passionate mind, everyday so young, so beautiful, so hopeful to me, everyday so memorable, sweet memories being recorded in my life history. I came back to my sister's bed with a new memory about strawberries and told her the story of strawberries in the forest and summer camp adventures.

I listened to Alsou, a young Russian singer. Alsou sings melancholy, but her voice floated in the air spreading love hearts. She sang my feelings out; the love air sang out to the people I loved. It went down through my ear, to my brain and then to my heart. The sing song carried my thought, heart, and swung me gently in its arms. It felt like my sister's warm hug on a lonely night, pouring of a love into my empty heart. My sister sang Alsou's songs at home on a lousy Saturday, in the kitchen while she calmly burnt the food, in the shower when she thought she was gorgeous, in a rest room when she was bored, in the car when she was sick, in her Russian high school concerts, in front of her teachers and fellow students. But now I don't know if she still sings them everywhere. I don't know if she sleeps alone like me, while holding a toy..

I loved Kimono, I built a friendship with the Chinese, I lived with Americans, I learned English, I heard Jay-Z's music, I loved hip hop. I danced Latino. I enjoyed Irish music, I adored Tahitian dance. I felt Tongan pride. I saw a Caucasian mother, a dark skin father and a brownish child. I looked above a window, and saw curly hair, straight hair, brown hair, blond hair, red hair, and black hair. I saw variety, a culture. It was another of God's miracles, and I revered them, revered and cherished every single one of them. I wanted to go back to our bed and sleep together with my sister. While I play with her hair, I want to tell her about how the Hawai'i sky is never really black like back home, how the ocean waves make my conscience shaky, and how the erect mammal-less mountains leave me nervous. Also I wanted to tell about the cultures I've seen, people I've met, diversity I've experienced, places I've been. Tell her the dreams we used to talk when we were young, lying in our bed together: growing up beautiful ladies, independent lives, education, love, learning English. These were the futures we used to imagine. We came to those futures in the year 2005, our future in the clouds, but did we know we would crave the

past so much; the little girls who slept side by side and dreamed about their future?

I looked at myself in the mirror, brown small round eyes, glaring sadly. My eyebrows were furrowed, as if to say, "Everything isn't really ok, anyways." My dreams were stuck on the board, Chile, London, Tokyo, New York, Gobi Desert, Naomi Campbell, new Jaguar, J Lo fur, dad, mom, friends, black mustang horse, strawberry forest, and peace. I was both prince with mustache and princess with crown; I was both pretty and ugly, both happy and sad, both my sister and me. I remembered looking out through the open window from the third floor of our apartment, and seeing Ulaan-Baatarians walking outside, basically people like me. Some were sleepless at night sometimes; some were alone during holidays sometimes, still some were interrupted by huge parties and fake friends, some had a white cat like I had, and some missed their sister somewhere like me sometimes. Nothing really bothered me anymore, even my sister that was far away. I peeled away my sister's picture from the mirror, "I'll see you later my lovely dear baby sister!"



Living Lines

Arapera Peeni

Manuel's Promise

Ailen Marie V. David

"Whatever happened to Manuel Flores?" the people of San Andres wondered sarcastically. It had been 10 years since Manuel left our little town, yet the people had never forgotten the promise he made to us. Nobody was really sure what had really happened to Manuel, yet there were plenty of interesting speculations circulating around town. Mang Pabling, who spoke like he was always right, claimed that Manuel was never coming back because he found himself a Spanish wife. Aling Nene serenely announced to the people that according to her psychic powers, Manuel was in a very far away and peaceful place. Whether which one was right or not, the people had already made up their minds that Manuel was not coming back anymore. Only his parents had remained hopeful. They indignantly proclaimed, "Manuel will never forget his promise, not his town, his motherland, nor his parents. He will come back." Days, weeks, and years had passed and Manuel's parents were still patiently and faithfully waiting for him. I'm not sure if I was just dreaming but sometimes in the middle of the night I would wake up to hear a woman's sobbing and lamenting words dispersed into the night breeze: "Oh, Manuel, my Manuel! Why did you forsake your parents who love you most?" Poor Manuel's parents! They never knew that they were only waiting in vain because the truth was, Manuel Flores did already return.

I was only 10 years old when Manuel left our little town for Spain. Even as a young child, I knew every truth, fact, and rumor of Manuel's leaving. Most of the people in San Andres thought that he was very lucky. But I didn't think so. I thought he got to go to Spain because he deserved it. You see, he was the smartest boy in San Andres. Other than the wealthy dela Torre's and Father Fernando Borromeo, he was the only one in San Andres who could read, write, do math, and speak fluent Spanish. Smart people dream big so I thought that it was only right for him to dream of studying medicine in Spain.

I heard him tell his good friend one time while they were walking towards the dela Torre plantation, "you know, Ramon, if I had even just _ of the _ of Don Federico's money, I would go to Spain and study medicine." Then Manuel stopped and faced an empty land where I

hid when my mother wanted to give me a bath. As if he was receiving some sort of vision, Manuel gazed for a few moments at the weeds and high grass. Then with his reverie eyes, he said faintly but with conviction, "then I would return and build a clinic and even a school right here." When I heard Manuel utter these words, I truly felt his sincerity but I also realized its impossibility. I did not mean to underestimate Manuel's intellect and skill, but the reality was, that Manuel's parents were poor.

Actually, everybody in San Andres was poor except for the dela Torre's. If you were to visit San Andres, you would notice that all the houses looked the same - old, ugly, patched shacks - until you were to get to the end of the town. That's where the mansions and the sugarcane and rice plantations of the dela Torre's were located. Everybody in San Andres either worked in the mansion or in the plantation. The workers were well cared for by the dela Torre's. However, they were not generous enough to make the lives of the people better. Everybody in San Andres was chained with the fatiguing life cycle of our town. If you're born in San Andres, you would work in the plantation or mansion, probably marry your neighbor, and die in San Andres. Only Manuel was brave enough to break off from the chain.

Despite his family's poverty, Manuel was very much determined to pursue his dreams. "I am not only doing this for myself but also for my parents and San Andres" he told a man who commented that he was making his parents worry too much about his selfish ambitions. His loving parents, Mang Andoy and Aling Medi, did not care what other people thought about Manuel and his dreams. In fact, they were very supportive of him and were willing to do anything for their only child. One night, unknown to Manuel, after all the workers had gone to their homes from a day's work, Mang Andoy and Aling Medi silently prayed to every Saint they knew, then gathered all the courage they could and stealthily went to see the wealthiest man in San Andres. With the glow of a weakening gas lamp, they had a very confidential and serious conversation with Don Federico. We never found out the details of their conversation but we did know that Don Federico became instrumental in financing Manuel's education in Spain.

At first, Manuel and his parents tried to keep their agreement with Don Federico a secret. They seemed to have forgotten that they were in living in San Andres. There was nothing you could not find out in San Andres. The news of Manuel's leaving all started with Asuncion who was asked by Don Federico to find one of his son's old suits and give it to Manuel. The simple chore immediately sparked her

interest and within less than an hour, she told the other maids about it and they then passed it on to their husbands. Their husbands shared the gossip with their drinking buddies, who passed it on to their wives, and so on and so forth, until the last people to share the gossip were Manuel and his parents. In less than two days, they were confronted with the question of whether it was true that Manuel was leaving for Spain and if Don Federico was lending them money. Ever since then the people never became weary of talking about Manuel and Spain.

I will never forget the day Manuel left for Spain. It was an early morning in August 19, 1895. Even before the cock crowed, I was awake. Actually, the whole town of San Andres was wide-awake. My brother carried me on his back as he excitedly ran towards Manuel's house to witness the very first poor person in San Andres to wear a suit, ride a carriage, and leave San Andres. To my dismay, a crowd had already gathered around the house. My brother was a man of good disposition and he was able to scoot around the crowd. Finally, he was able to find a spot in front of the whole crowd and laid me on the ground. I saw Manuel come out of the door and he looked a bit ashamed to see almost the whole population of San Andres gathered around his house. He never said anything to us, not even waved his hand goodbye. All he gave us was a faint smile and a nod. It seemed everything was in slow motion while he was walking towards the carriage. He never looked at the crowd, his focus was on the carriage. I looked up at him admiringly as he walked towards the carriage, wishing I was like him. He passed by me then turned and bent down before me. He gave me a smile and whispered, "I will come back and help you walk again." Sometimes silence can overcome you when something is so overwhelming. That's what happened to me. I was not able to ask why, how, when or even thank him. I was 7 years old when I contracted an unknown illness which caused my limbs to weaken. I always thought I would never walk again but Manuel Flores showered me with hope. Once he gave me his promise, I became one of the faithful ones awaiting his return.

Once every two or three months, Mang Andoy and Aling Medi received a letter from Manuel. I thought I was even more excited and anxious to hear what Manuel had to say than his parents were. I always hoped he had a message for me. He never said anything about me in his letters, though I knew in my heart that he had not forgotten his promise to me. Early 1897, Mang Andoy and Aling Medi received Manuel's last letter. He wrote:

My dear Father and Mother,

I have recently received the sad news of the execution by firing squad of our dear patriot, Jose Rizal. The whole nation is mourning for his tragic death. He was a great man, I tell you. He had many hopes and dreams for our country. The Spanish government considers him a traitor but to us Filipinos, the persecuted ones, he's a hero.

I am anxious to know of your condition and also of San Andres as I know that the war is on against Spain. Cavite, Pampanga, Batangas, and other provinces are in chaos right now. Oh, my father and mother! I am deeply troubled by the unfortunate circumstances of our dear country. Andres Bonifacio has begged me to come back to the Philippines and help with the Katipunan he has founded. My medical experience is needed to aid the injured soldiers. Armed revolution has become his last resort as all the peaceful reforms our La Liga Filipina group have been advocating for have been futile. He angrily told me that if we could not get what we want the peaceful way, we would get it the hard way.

Carlos, my friend at the University, rolled his eyes in disappointment. He thought I was crazy to even consider the option. He reminded me of my good life in Madrid and that my future is here. I am close to finishing my degree and there is a beautiful woman in love with me. He said there is no other reason for me to come home at this chaotic time other than to make my life miserable. But Andres told me, "I know you plan on coming back someday, but there is no time that you are as badly needed by our suffering motherland than now!"

I have been constantly thinking about this exasperating dilemma. But I still do not know what to do. What should I do? Oh, how I wish you were here with me! You would know what to do. You would know what to advise me. You would know how to comfort me.

I have not made a decision yet. I do not want to do anything I would regret. In a few days, I will have to make a final decision and I will immediately inform you. Do not worry much about me. Whatever I choose to do will be for the best of everyone and everything. God bless you, my loving parents and our dying nation!

Lovingly,
Manuel

That was the last we heard from Manuel. Nobody in San Andres, including his parents, ever found out if he came back to the Philippines or stayed in Spain, except for me. The truth was a few months after Manuel sent his last letter, he came back to the Philippines for the first time in 2 years. He went straight to Cavite to

meet with Andres Bonifacio. I was informed that Manuel devoted all his time in taking care of the injured soldiers. He even donated to the Katipunan all the money he had. It was unknown to me, however, if Manuel took up arms and joined in the battle. But I knew that it was not far from a possibility that Manuel participated in the actual battles against the Spanish and that his voice was among those who valiantly shouted, "Mabuhay ang kasarinlan ng Pilipinas!" "Long live the Philippine independence!" Sometime in 1898, before Philippine independence from Spain was declared, he also became among those unnamed heroes who died for the country. How he died, what or who killed him had not been made known.

Most of the people in San Andres, especially the dela Torre's, thought that Manuel was a man without integrity and honor. He did not keep the promise he made. I remember the first time Manuel shared with the people his intentions of studying in Spain. He was tired of the false assumptions and accusations made behind his back. So to silence these gossip folks he boldly told a group of old men gathered around, "I will leave San Andres so I can come back and make a difference."

I wrote this story so that San Andres would know what a person of real integrity and honor is made of. As I look around San Andres, everything is still the same since Manuel left. The houses are the still the same old, ugly, patched shacks. The people still work at the plantation and mansion. Many people still die of unknown diseases. The children are still being educated by the abusive Father Fernando Borromeo. The spot where Manuel hoped to build a clinic and a school is still an empty, lifeless piece of land. And my limbs have been completely paralyzed. Nevertheless, I still think that Manuel Flores was a man of honor and integrity because he did come back.

The Adverb

Lauren Campbell

An adverb proudly came to school one day
I saw him on his way
to the office at the end of the hall
to sign up for fall
term and join my ninth-grade English class.
“Grammar,” he thought, “at last!”
New books in hand, he climbed a flight
of stairs to find the right
room with Ms. Lake’s name on the board
nailed next to the door
through which he walked excited to learn.
Then Ms. Lake turned
around to see him standing near.
“Why are you here?”
she screamed and grabbed two
red pens, brand new
and chased him out the way he came.
he ran away in shame.
she stomped back in the class, yelling,
“In this class, we use showing, not telling!”
After the hour, I went to the window, seeing
the adverb humbly leaving.



Untitled

Hung-Lan Kao

I am crazy in love

Michelle Bautista

I am crazy in love.

I AM

insane-in-the-membrane

head-up-in-the-clouds

numbered-to-my-tiptoes

living-in-his-cologne

corey-loves-tapanga

incubus-kinda-stellar

fools-rush-in

flying-past-the-stars

tower-records-sugar-high

IN LOVE.

Le dream. Boy meets Girl.

Le sigh. You and me.

Couldn't let you leave my house after dinner.

Every last kiss became second to the last...

third to the last... fourth to the last...

Melt. Me. And swirl me in your dessert bowl.

Rocky Road. Double Fudge Brownie. Dulce de Leche.

Kiss me like French Vanilla. And you did.

And you did... and you did... and you did...



NYC Ghetto Surfer
Lesley Miles

Captured Monet

Gina Smith

You enter the gallery and notice at first view, a colorful portrait of a pretty girl in a white dress that has been ruffled and smoothed out in front of her.

She sits in specks and strokes of colors surrounding and contributing to her light and vibrancies.

An attractive face, from where you stand, and one you want to reach and stroke.

Thinking to easily release her hair of the tight bun she has spun and tucked underneath her bonnet.

Maybe you desire to sit under the tree with her while she reads imaginations to your thoughts and radiance to your ears.

You step closer and notice her placid hands and smooth face...

Suddenly romance drifts into your sweet mind expecting to find hidden avenues of long-awaited soft touches, simple delights of giggles and sunshine-filled rain-drops of kisses. Smiling with the dream, you gather the warmth of browns and gold sounds of birds and a slight breeze cooling your being as you smell in the refreshment of her glance;

Enchanted daze is your pose.

She then calls you into her arms and entreats you to lie on her lap as she playfully runs delicate fingers through your high expectations of scalp and hair.

You realize after living within the daydream of deciding who she is to you, you've walked centimeters in front of her now and recognize splotches of discomfort and you've formed yourself into a captious critic;

Noticing she has blemishes of paint you failed to accept;

flaws of wild blues, greens and sharp purples that seem to catch you off-guard and thrash the picture-perfect ideal you conjured up for the lady you stood off admiring from the distances you were complacent with.

Flummoxed to what splashes of emotion she has thrown at you, you retreat...

Undecidedly, you search everywhere but at her sitting motionless...

Frictionless dialogue would work well now as you try to pass off squeamish reactions you display

This creation has taken you by surprise and you want it to be treated similarly.

Perfect! You can use that as an excuse to escape and forget the incubus you fantasized.

Yet she sits untouched.

Looked over repeatedly again and again as fun dances from the 3-D paints of pleasure turn her into a "flat-surfaced interesting" only for eye-speculation.



Paradise Lost

Lesley Miles

Cake and What?

Emma Lowe

Excitement! Yes! Today's Dad's birthday, and I get to make the cake!

I jump out of bed and race to the bathroom. As I'm sitting on the toilet, I squeal to myself over and over again, "Remember to wash your hands. Your hands have to be clean before you make the cake. I get to make the cake!" I'm in the fourth grade and sometimes have a hard time remembering to wash my hands every time I tinkle. I've been getting better and I usually remember, but I still forget. Okay. Done. Wipe. Pull up clothes. Flush.

I open the door and run to the kitchen. Oops! Forgot to wash my hands! I run back to the bathroom. Turn on water. Wet hands. Dispense soap. Rub hands together to make the bubbles. Rinse. I shake my hands so all the water drops fly around the bathroom, landing on the counter, wall, mirror, and floor.

Disappointment. Now I have to clean up the water mess. Mom says, "You better not leave a mess in the bathroom when you wash your hands." Towel. I grab the towel and wipe the water over the counter, the wall, the mirror. I look around, make sure no one is looking, and wipe the water around the floor. Mom says, "The floor is covered with germs. Don't ever use my good towels to clean the floor. Use a rag." I peek out the bathroom door. The coast is clear. I hang the towel back on the towel hanger.

I run back to the kitchen. Jitters and giggles run up my chest, down my legs, and out my head, arms and feet. I get to make the cake by myself. Neither my brother nor my sisters are allowed to help me. Mom never helps. Mom says, "I did my job cooking for this family. You want to eat, you learn how to cook."

How do I make the cake? Book. I need that book that tells you what to do to make food like in the pictures. Recessippy book. Rezipie book. Reessippe book. I don't know. Where is it? Mom says, "Put my things back where they belong!" Shelf! That's where the recessippy book is. Wow, lots of books. Which one's right? None. Mom never used a book to make a cake. She used a box. Red box. A picture of a cake is on the box.

Where's the box? Closet! I open the big closet door and look inside. Distress. No box. Where is it? Why isn't there a box? There's supposed to be a box. Ask Mom. Scared. I can't. Mom won't help. I can hear what she would say, "If you can't find it yourself then don't do it," and I won't get to make the cake. Frustration. What am I going to do? Ala! Ala knows where to find the box. Ala is my sister. She's only two years older than me, but she knows how the closet is organized. Smug. I just learned that word. It means everything is in order, put where it belongs.

I run down the hallway. "Stop running in my house!" Nervous. I woke up Mom. "Sorry!" No sound. Whew, safe. I scuttle to the doorway of my room. There are three of us girls. We all share a room. My brother gets his own room because he's a boy. Mom says, "No girls in boys' rooms and no boys in girls' rooms." Why am I here? Ala. I tiptoe to her bed. "Ala," I whisper. "Ala!" my whisper is more like a rasp. She turns over and looks at me through one eye.

"What?"

"I need help. I can't find the box with the cake on it."

"So?"

Exasperation. "So, I need it to make Dad's cake."

"It's in the pantry."

What's a pantry? "Where?"

"On the fourth shelf, next to the flour."

"It's not. I looked there already." Pantry. The big closet is a pantry.

Ala grunts and flings the blanket off. She gets up and glares at me. I follow her to the kitchen and watch as she opens the pantry. "It's right heeer...where is it?" She pulls out the flour, white sugar, brown sugar, powdered sugar, and other containers with strange contents. The flour, white sugar, brown sugar, powdered sugar, and other containers with mysterious contents go back in the pantry and out come the cans. Green beans. Cream of mushroom. Baked beans. Kidney beans. In go the cans. Out comes the gigantic bucket of rice. In goes the gigantic bucket of rice. "There isn't any. You got to tell Mom." NO!

Terrified. Stumble up the stairs. I hope she doesn't get mad. I raise my hand to knock on the door. My hand drops. I take a deep breath and let it out. I take another deep breath and hold it. Knock, knock. Silence. Knock, knock, "Mom?" More silence. Louder. Knock, knock, "Mom."

"WHAT?"

"There's no cake."

"What are you talking about?"

"There's no cake for Dad. Both Ala and I looked in the pantry. It's not there."

"So?"

"It's Dad's birthday and you said I could make his cake."

"Well, we don't have one."

Don't argue. You'll get in trouble. Trembling, "But it's Dad's birthday."

"I don't care if it's his birthday! We don't have a cake and I'm not going to get one! Get back downstairs and leave me alone!"

Heartbroken. How can she not care? It's Dad's birthday. He needs a cake. I go to the living room and curl up on the couch. What am I going to do? I was supposed to make his cake. He's going to cry if he doesn't have a cake. "If your Dad wants a cake then call him and tell him to buy one when he gets home."

Call him? "Okay, uh, yes, Mom." Where is his work number?

I get off the couch and go to the telephone. On the phone? No. Under the phone? No. Next to the phone? No. In the drawer? Yes! "Dad? I was supposed to make you a cake but we don't have any. Mom said that if you want a cake then you have to buy one and I can make it when you get home."

"All right," he sighs.

Mom's mad because I called Dad to buy the cake. I don't understand. She told me to call him. I mope. I wanted to have the cake finished in the morning so that in the afternoon, just before Dad gets home, I could put the frosting on. Mom says, "You have to wait until the cake is cooled off before you put the frosting on or it will melt." I'm not sure what will melt, the cake or the frosting. Frosting. We don't have any of that either.

"Dad? Can you buy frosting too? Thanks." Now she's mad because I called him to bring frosting too. Confusion.

It's late. The sun went down a long time ago. My brother and sisters go to bed. Despair. I have to go to bed soon. My ears perk up at the sound of Dad's keys in the door. He's home! I rush to the door and look for the grocery bags. Dad laughs. I take the bag from him and pull out the cake box. I look at the pictures. Water. Oil. Eggs. Three eggs. Preheat oven 375 degrees. I gather all of the ingredients and mix them in a bowl. Anxious. Mom and Dad are yelling again. Don't listen. I grease the cake pan and pour the mixture in. Still yelling. I put the cake in the oven and set the timer for 25 minutes. Still yelling. Ding! I pull the cake out of the oven. I dump the cake onto a cooling rack. Still yelling. When I can touch the cake without getting burned, I move the cake to a platter. I spread frosting all over the cake. Then I

get the old cake writing gel and write Happy Birthday Dad! The cake was still too warm. The frosting melts, not the cake. I look at the cake and I am happy it is done.

I creep upstairs. Knock, knock. Silence. "Mom, Dad? The cake's done." More silence. I shuffle back downstairs. Put the cake away, no one is going to eat it.

Elation. "Hi, Sweetie. The cake looks great!"

Petrified. "Don't you dare eat that cake! You don't deserve it!"

"Now is not the time. She worked hard on the cake."

"I don't care. You come home late and expect to be able to sit down and enjoy cake? Why were you home late? Did you go to HER house? Didn't SHE give you any cake? Didn't SHE have HER kids make a cake for you?"

What? Who?

"Stop it."

"What's the matter? Afraid to tell the truth? Afraid to tell your daughter you already had birthday cake?"

"Stop, now."

"Why? Did you have cake? Did you go there? Was it just the two of you? DID YOU @#! HER?"

"ENOUGH!"

Cowering. Mom hurls my cake at Dad.

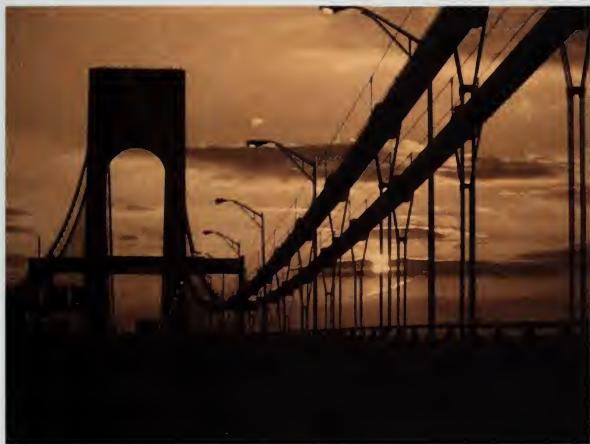
"I HATE YOU!" She storms off.

Crying, quaking.

"Sorry about that." Dad wipes some frosting off his face. "Your cake really was nice. Don't worry about the mess. I'll clean it up. Why don't you go to bed now?" Plop! A lump of cake falls off his shirt.

I nod my head, turn around and drag my feet to my room. What did Mom mean? Who is SHE? Why would Dad go to someone else's house for birthday cake? Mom made the mess, so why is Dad cleaning it up? Why did she throw my cake? What does @#! mean, and why would Dad do it to HER?

Perplexed. Why did she throw my cake? Hatred. I crawl into bed and drift off to sleep. What is @#!?



Verrazano

Lesley Miles

Obtaining My Desire

Kathleen Majdali

Marriage:

I first realized I liked him when I was four when he held my hand as our families walked to the wishing fountain together. Because his family lived in Utah and mine lived in Southern California, I was seven years old when I met Jeffrey Larson for the second time. Upon introduction, he patted me on the head like I was inferior. When we spoke, we realized we had a lot in common. We talked and debated our views on concerning issues. I was growing quite fond of him and knew that I wouldn't get to see him for a long time once we parted that evening. I knew had to let him know how I felt. He wanted to tell me something too.

"You go first."

"No, you go first." Somehow, it came down to pulling straws and I lost. "I don't know how to say it but I want to marry you." My face felt hot and my heart pounded. I calculated on my fingers how many years it would be until we'd be old enough to get married. Eleven. Eleven years feels like an eternity when you haven't even lived that long.

All he said back was, "I love you too." I still count him as my first kiss.

Computer:

In first and second grade, I experienced the thrill of technology with our monthly visit to the computer lab. Of course, in 1988 and 1989 we had to type in html code that the lab lady had written on the chalkboard to get to our "Word Worm" program and the monitors displayed the ever-lovely colors black and orange. Only two or three displayed black and green so, if we were at the head of the line, or knew how to speed walk, we could claim one of the coveted green screens. The programs were extraordinarily simple compared to the technology we have today but I fell in love with them. "Word Worm" was my favorite game. A small line (the worm) inched forward on the screen

and we had to type in the word before he reached it and ate it. For a five-year-old, it was thrilling.

Best Friends:

My cousin, Matt, and I have been close since we were born. I'm pretty sure we knew each other long before birth. How else can you become instant friends? When we were younger, not yet in school, we spent the night at each other's houses, or at our Grandma Teddie's, every-so-often without worry. When we started school, it became nearly impossible to do this, so our compromise was to spend a week or so at a time at one house or the other, usually his.

Whenever I got together with Matt, we always concocted some sort of mischievous plan and worried one of our mothers half to death. As many times as we worried them half to death, there should have been twelve deaths between them. My Aunt Beverly would have taken ten of them; we were over at Matthew's house far more frequently than mine, especially during the summertime. Once, we set a booby trap that resulted in Aunt Beverly receiving a blow from a set of scriptures to her head as she walked through the door of Matt's room. We sat mortified until we heard her response, "Well, that might just be a sign. Maybe they wouldn't have conked me if I read them a little more often." We all laughed.

Hawaii:

My cousin Matt had blond hair, blue eyes and as toothy a smile as I had. He wasn't an only child but seemed like he was. His three older brothers Kirt, Greg and Mike and his sister, Tammy, were all born between twenty-five and fifteen years before him. None of them lived at home. The closest in age, Mike, was in college at BYU-Hawaii when we were five. I saw some of the pictures Mike sent home or brought home during breaks. His adventures surfing, skateboarding, going on hikes, having bonfires and playing guitars on the beach all seemed so fun. I desired to do all of this myself. Being the oldest in my family, I didn't have any older siblings to admire but I always thought Matt's older brothers and sister were really cool.

Motorcycle:

Mike had a lot of cool stuff he couldn't take with him to Hawaii. When playing in Matt's backyard, I always passed a mini bike; a small, motorized cycle that looked just about my size. I got up and sat on it, pretending I was riding. I was afraid to get caught; even Matt didn't know I did that sometimes. I always wanted to turn it on but, fortunately for my own safety, no key was in the ignition. Who knows what trouble I might have caused for myself?

Red Electric Guitar:

We went into Mike's room, an exploring child's dream, and messed with all his stuff: skateboards, cards, candy, magazines, audio-tapes, and surfboards. We took some Astro Pops we figured would get old before Mike could enjoy them. The most intriguing and most off-limits of these items was Mike's shiny, red, electric guitar. I touched it once and Matt freaked out, then he got curious too. He turned on the amplifier and started to strum. A sudden burst of noise came from the amplifier, so loud it frightened me a little. When I adjusted my hearing to the volume, I distinguished that it sounded exactly like the music I'd heard on Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure. It didn't really but I believed it did and I was hooked.

Surfboard:

Mike's surfboards were almost as off-limits as the guitar, but we managed to find some old, trashed boards lying around against the A-frame shed in the backyard. Matt and I fell asleep to movies like *Endless Summer II*, *North Shore*, and *Big Wednesday*. Surfing looked so fun. I imagined that I would try standing up on my boogie board the next time I went to the beach. That would be like surfing, wouldn't it?

Skateboard:

The only possessions of Mike's we were allowed to bother were his skateboards. I was too intimidated to stand on the skateboard at first. What four or five-year-old wouldn't be? Our age of six years and the 35° grade of the hill that was Carol Drive, the street in front of Matt's house, made it challenging so we "bummed" it or sat down to ride. I was impressed when Mike came home and I saw him skate down the hill standing up. I wanted to try it and Mike dared Matt to try it too. I stood with one foot on the board and aimed it straight down the street. It was too intimidating. I couldn't do it but what I could do was turn the board to the side. I stepped on and rode from one end of the street's width to the other. It was still downhill, just not as steep and it helped me get used to the idea of going straight down. The best part was the praise I received from Mike for being more daring than Matt. When Matt heard Mike's comment, he got up and wearily tried my technique. I had beaten Matt at his own game. I made an accomplishment that I was proud of. I liked skateboarding!

Skateboard.

I asked my mother for a skateboard for Christmas when I was six. I got one of those nineteen-eighties Nash skateboards. It had neon pink and black designs and pink, plastic handgrips on the front and

along the sides. I tell people that I officially started skateboarding around the age of six or seven when I received that board.

Unfortunately, it was stolen when my little sister left it down the street and I didn't see a new board for a long time. When I was about nine, I got another skateboard for Christmas. It wasn't a real skateboard but a scooter without the handlebars. I thought it was cool because it was a Back to the Future board. But I still wished for a real skateboard like the ones at Matt's house.

The next one was harder to get. I specifically asked for a real skateboard like the guys in magazines used. I saved my money, bought the deck without the wheels, and pretended to skateboard in my house, practicing ollies in the living room. I must have looked pathetic because my mother gave in and took me down to the skate shop to buy the rest of the parts. Eventually, that one was left down the street by a sibling and it, too, was stolen. My most recent skateboard came for my twentieth birthday. I didn't know many twenty-year-old-girls who were asking for skateboards for their birthdays. I felt a little out of place, even in Southern California, but I wouldn't give up skateboarding. Plus, this skateboard had flowers on the bottom and I expected that no one would want to steal it. Four years later, I still have that last board, and I still love skateboarding!

Surfboard.

I asked for years and years before I finally received a surfboard. I finally got one for my sixteenth birthday after I had begun to show some improvement in the sport. Until I did get my own board, I had to use a borrowed one from Matt's house. It was a short board he had outgrown but it seemed to fit me. It's rather difficult to learn on a short board though, and I spent two long, hard summers of trial and error with no one to tell me what to do or what I was doing wrong. I read some books on surfing and they gave me some useful pointers. I watched *Endless Summer II* for reference on how to move, paddle, and stand up. When my parents saw how hard I was trying, how much I wanted to surf, they gave in and let me have my own board. It only cost them forty dollars, which was a steal for a decent, undamaged surfboard.

Now that I've been surfing for almost ten years, I've made several purchases, several findings, and gathered together my own little quiver of surfboards. Somehow, my favorite board is an old, torn up, green one that only cost my parents forty dollars.

Red Electric Guitar.

I asked for an electric guitar when I was about nine years old. I received a battery-powered, white, plastic, Fisher Price guitar. I don't

think my parents understood my intentions. I did manage to have fun with the toy but, although it suppressed my craving, it didn't satisfy my hunger.

One Christmas when I was about sixteen, I was shopping with my mother and she decided to go into Guitar Center and look at musical instruments. I was stoked. Inside, what seemed like hundreds of colorful, shiny, electric guitars lined the walls. I was immediately drawn to a shiny, red, electric guitar sitting on a display stand near the front entrance. I held back when I approached it as though I were in a museum. I was used to the idea that I wasn't allowed to touch. I followed my mother as she browsed through the percussion instruments and the music books but she was taking far too long and I wandered back over to the guitar. A salesperson came over and asked me if I'd like to try it. "Yes, please." He graciously plugged the guitar into an amplifier for me. I only knew three chords but they made the most amazing sound. I found that the guitar came with a set that included a case, a shoulder strap, an instruction book, extra strings, a few picks, a guitar cable, and a small amplifier. I had to have it. My mother found me with the salesman. I can only imagine what her thoughts might have been but the look in her eye said it all for me. She wasn't enthused. I begged for the next hour, giving reasons and explanations and reminding her how I had always wanted one. She didn't seem to like the \$200 price tag. Finally, we left the store, empty-handed. I was devastated. I knew if it didn't happen then, I would never see that guitar again. I broke down in tears. "It's not fair! It's always so hard to get what I want. I could've been so good by now if I got a guitar when I first asked for one." Eventually, my mom gave in. I felt a little dumb when we went back inside and she handed them a slip of paper. She had secretly put the guitar on hold. My embarrassment at being a cry-baby wore off when I got to take my prize package out to the car. My sister Sarah still hasn't forgiven my mother for buying me a guitar on what happened to be her twelfth birthday, December 5th, 1997. I still play the guitar because I'm still hooked.

Motorcycle.

Every Christmas for several years, I asked for toys similar to what I had seen at Matt's house. Next on my list was a motorcycle. What I received come Christmas morning was a battery-powered motorcycle (I had wanted a gas-powered mini-bike, something like today's pocket bikes). My parents did not realize when I asked for these items, I intended on getting real versions and not toys.

The day came when a boy I had been dating agreed to take me motorcycle shopping. Two boys I dated reintroduced me to the thrill

of motorcycle riding. Again, I wanted my own. We went to several stores and all the bikes seemed to be way out of my budget, until we reached the last store. My date was interested in showing me the sport bikes or “crotch rockets”. I was drawn to the cruisers. One in particular caught my eye. It was shiny, black and looked like a smaller Harley Davidson, still street legal though. We asked the salesman and he brought back some information about the bike. It was the least expensive new bike in the store. The salesman began making me offers. I kept refusing and he kept coming back with lower prices. I thought it was a fun game; I wasn’t really serious about buying it until he came back with his final offer. A brand new, 2005, Kawasaki Eliminator for \$3,200? That was an impossible deal and I knew it. I decided to get it. I knew my parents would have a fit but I bought the motorcycle anyway.

I kept the bike from the day I bought it, November 18th 2004 (my brother Joey’s 21st birthday), until my mother made me sell it in August 2005. She was relieved that I wouldn’t be able to take it with me to school. Maybe it did end up causing more trouble than it was worth but it was fun while it lasted.

Hawaii.

When I was a cheerleader in high school, my team earned the chance to cheer at the Pro Bowl football game in Hawaii. I wanted to go; it had been my life’s goal to visit Hawaii as a travel destination. At the last minute, our team had to cancel because we found out that our more important trip to a national cheerleading competition in Florida overlapped the Hawaii trip and we could only make it to one event. I wondered if I would ever make it to Hawaii.

As my time at my junior college was winding down and I had only one semester left, I began to think about where I would go for my bachelor’s degree. Automatically, the BYUs were an option. I knew that my cousin Matt was attending BYU-Idaho but that certainly wasn’t my first choice. I wanted to go to Hawaii. I applied to BYU-Hawaii and BYU-Idaho without considering BYU Provo. The letter came in the mail on my birthday last year, almost like a birthday present. I was accepted to BYU-Hawaii and I was set on going.

Somehow it all worked out, as if by magic. I got a good summer job that helped me earn a lot of the money for my first semester. I miraculously found off-campus housing just a week before I came out. I know that Hawaii is where I want and need to be. Being in Hawaii has helped me accomplish a lot of my goals. I’ve had my own adventures surfing, skateboarding, going on hikes, having bonfires and playing guitars on the beach. I can’t imagine being anywhere better.

Best Friends.

When Matt and I reached a certain age, around eleven or twelve, we were no longer encouraged to hang out or spend the night at each other's houses. I was pushed to do more girly activities and make friends with girls. I didn't want to stop playing at Matt's house. I felt left out when I wasn't invited to his birthday party one year; it was for "boys only." It took a while but I began to warm up to the idea of having girls as friends. I met my best friend when I was almost eighteen, in 2001. My friend, April, was four years younger than I but it felt like we had been friends all our lives. Matt went on his mission from November of 2002 until November 2004. He never noticed April until he got back from his mission and then he began to ask me about her. I told him she was trouble, stubborn and unruly. He wouldn't listen to me and they began to date.

January 2, 2006, at about 2:00am I got a call from April, "Matt and I are officially engaged! He proposed last night; it was so cute..." She went on and told me her story in detail. I had known their engagement was inevitable since April (the month) of 2005 when we all met up in Utah to see General Conference. When Matt went back to school that January, he and April stayed in contact by calling each other every night. I shouldn't have been surprised when they met up after those four months that they would want to spend a lot of time together but it made me a little sad when they kept ditching me to hang out with each other. That's when I knew that they would end up together. It was the only logical explanation for their ditching me and for becoming best friends with April so quickly. It was probably because I did know her long before birth. It's good to be gaining a cousin, a forever friend.

Computer.

I asked for a computer for Christmas. What I got wasn't quite the same as our Apples at school. It was about the size of a modern, 15-inch laptop but it couldn't open up like one. The keyboard and the screen were both on top of the machine and slanted down from the screen, at the thicker end of the computer, to the keyboard. It was blue and tan; it had a built-on handle, and it took eight, heavy D batteries. It had learning games and saved me from a lot of drama on long family road trips. It wasn't quite what I wanted though.

My parents decided what I should receive for earning my associate's degree. December 2005, my parents finally got it right and gave me the gift of an Apple computer. I couldn't have hoped for a better computer. As I sit here and utilize its magnificent technology, I reminisce about all the gifts I have received in the course of my life and I

realize that the only thing missing is what I have desired more than any of my possessions. Don't get me wrong. I am grateful for what I have obtained through my diligence and desire to develop my talents and improve myself but there is something that I have wanted longer or desired more... Something I have yet to attain...

Marriage.



Morning's Promise

Jeremy Moncur

Lonesome Chinese New Year

by Ngiik Hee Ting

"Happy Chinese New Year!" I greeted some friends whom I had not seen for seventeen months since I left Malaysia for Hawaii. Who exactly were they? I could not recall. The imagery, however, became obscure as my eyes were blurred by mist. A series of phone rings faded in and killed my dream.

With my eyes half-closed, I rolled down my bed and banged my knees against the carpeted floor. Regardless of the painful fall, I grabbed the phone before the caller gave up.

"Happy Chinese New Year!" A familiar male voice immediately registered in my brain. My boyfriend, Eugene, was calling. My sleepiness should be chased away by the spirit of Chinese New Year that he was trying to share, but unfortunately was not. I did not show much interest in our conversation since I was not there to celebrate Chinese New Year. He, on the other hand, proudly listed down all the things he did and experienced when the clock struck 12A.M.: he thought that his ear drums had been damaged due to a sudden explosion of the fire crackers; his ears were still ringing; he captured some video of himself lighting the firecrackers and was eager to share them with me and most importantly, he wanted to say how tired he was now.

I did not know how to answer, and I did not wish to comment on anything. I envied him. Eugene was studying in at a university in Australia, but he had a chance to go back to Malaysia to celebrate Chinese New Year once a year. The same, I was also pursuing a degree in Hawaii, but I had not been home for 17 months. I had already missed two Chinese New Year celebrations. So, I guess this call was more than just wishing me "Happy Chinese New Year." He did not call out of good intention, but to show off.

I felt excluded from Chinese society being in a foreign land with the Americanized Chinese society in my neighborhood. I had not felt any the Chinese New Year spirit so far. There were no firecrackers, no decorations, no Chinese New Year songs, no shopping for new clothes, and no family members around me. Nothing reminded me of Chinese New Year, except for the call from my boyfriend. That produced bitterness. That only brought bitterness in me.

We hung up the phone. I guess heHe probably dragged his weary body straight to bed without changing his smoky clothes into a pair of clean pajamas. Realizing that I was not pitied by anybody, I squeezed out a smile, a bitter smile. I tried to block all the sweet memories I had of Chinese New Year. Yet I failed. The memories streamed into my mind like flowing water, so clear and so crisp.

Seventeen months ago...

I was awakened by my father's loud stereo system. Feeling stiff, I stretched my body. I reached for the alarm clock, and the hour hand pointed to "7." My sleepiness went away as soon as I got out bed. I combed through my messy hair with my fingers, and mended straightened my sleeping clothes in order to present a tidier self in front of my parents. I was excited to getting my very first red packets from my parents. This tradition was and will be forever be the our younger Chinese generation's privilege. In ancient Chinese's context, red packets represented blessings from the older and married ones people to the younger ones. However, younger generations would take this opportunity to collect as many red packets as they could, not only from their parents but also from any other married ones, provided that they greeted the married ones with such greeting as "Gong Xi Fa Chai!" This phrase was meant to wishes others prosperity, but it has become one of the most powerful tools young people use for the younger ones to get more red packets from the married ones. I was also one of them.

As I walked down the stairs, I smelled the aroma of chicken soup. No doubt my mother was cooking my favorite long-life noodles with chicken soup at the kitchen. My dad was reading the newspaper. He spotted me, and greeted me with his glasses half-hanging on his nose. What an old man look for a middle-aged man.

"Where are Ah Chuan and Ah Tae? Wake them up, Ah Hee," my father said.

Oh, I should have mentioned those two lazy hogs earlier. Before I left my bed this morning, I peeped into my brothers' room. They were still pinned to their beds, and I witnessed their ugly sleeping poses. Ah Chuan, my eldest brother, with his mouth wide-opened was snoring hard. However, his habitual weakness did not seem to bother his roommate, Ah Tae, my other brother. Ah tTae's sleeping pose was a lot better than Ah Chuan's though his top was rolled up to his chest. His blanket had been kicked out of his bed and had landed in the distance. I could not bear to look at them any longer but laughed.

Back to reality, I was not awakened by my father's loud stereo but a phone call from my boyfriend. I woke up and found myself in a

small dorm instead of a double-terrace house. My roommate had her bed neatly made and had already left for the temple. There was neither loud stereo nor the aroma of my mother's chicken soup. Now I realized how much I missed being home with my family.

I headed to the cafeteria, and was delighted to see Chinese students along the hall. They did not greet each other with "Gong Xi Fa Cai." Neither did they wear any red clothes, not to mention new clothes. I recognized those same old clothes they always wore around campus. Red was significant for Chinese during this very season as it was a sign of prosperity and luck. This Chinese New Year which lacked of red was dull to me. There were not many people in the cafeteria. My sadness overcame me once more when I saw some Chinese decorations hanging on the ceiling. The decorations worked the same as the ornaments on the Christmas trees. They were, too, red. red too.

Again, they brought me back to my memories...

"Ah Hee, hold this for me." Ah Chuan was high on the ladder and was fixing the lantern on the ceiling while I was holding the cord on with one hand and sellotape on the other hand. I sang along with my father's stereo and danced a little bit.

"Hey, hey! You are pulling the cord! Stop it," Ah Chuan roared.

I did not move but stood still like a puppet. However, this did not affect my good mood.

"Now go and switch on the power. See if it's working," the puppet master ordered.

I switched on the power, and a dim light shone from the lantern.

"It's working! It's working!" I shouted with joy. I was flushed from my forehead to my shoulders. I felt like a 5-year-old child at 15.

My brother came towards me and tickled me. "Crazy girl," he continued, "Switch off the power."

He, left my sight with the ladder in his hands., left my sight when In Hawaii, my friend tapped on my shoulder.

After eating two eggs, a scoop of rice, two sausages and a glass of apple juice, none of which was Chinese food; I headed home with great disappointment. My head bent forward as if it weighed a hundred pounds. It was so heavy that I did not want to hold my head up until I reached my doorstep. There, I was back to in my room, again isolated myself from the society outside.

"Ah Hee, Ah Tae, Ah Chuan! Come eat breakfast!" My dad urged as he folded the newspaper with his fleshy fingers and dropped it on the coffee table, covering the food meant for the visitors. What if the ink stains the food and cause diarrhea for our visitors? I was

overwhelmed. Having lived with him for 15 years, I had never found this habit pleasurable. I guess I could never strip off my title and stop being a hygiene freak. My Dad swayed his plump body side to side as he marched to the kitchen, leaving the mess for me. Nevertheless, his loud stereo system still cheerfully sang my favorite Chinese New Year songs. My mom, on the other hand, was busy distributing bowls, plates, chopsticks, and spoons around our dining table. My mom, usually who was moderate in spending money on food, always made an exception on this special day. So let me introduce what we had here: For dinner we had long-life noodles, chicken soup, fried hard-boiled eggs, rice cake, and steamed fish with garlic and ginger sauce. Each and every dish was our favorite, so no complaints for today!

We sat at the table and looked at each other. Nobody was willing to offer a prayer. Our pointing fingers aimed everywhere but skipped past my father. He was the only non-LDS in our family. So, both my mom and I humbly gave the opportunity to the eldest priesthood holder – Ah Chuan, and we all chuckled upon hearing his grunting prayer. My dad, then, still practicing Chinese ancient traditions, placed some sweet incense in front of the pictures of my deceased ancestors. He muttered as he poured a can of beer into two golden-lined cups. The gas freely danced as they regained their freedom but quickly vanished into the smoky air. My father was not possessed by my ancestors but was inviting the spirits to feast upon the meaty chicken, juicy fruits and beer he bought especially for observing this special rite.

My mom reminded me not to break the long-life noodles in halves by any other means except for my teeth. She was being superstitious again. The ancient Chinese thought that the more you eat long-life noodles, the longer your life will be. So, if you were to shorten the long life noodles purposely, your life would also be shortened.

“Having a dish of fish on new year’s day means that we’ll always have more...”

Ah Tae interrupted my father’s speech, “Money?”

“Really?” Ah Chuan teased. Some A bit of grease had stained the corner of his lips as he devoured a drumstick. Amazingly, the chicken bone came out quite clean.

My veins were expanding, and my teeth bit my lower lip. I sensed the need to cure my homesickness. My fast fingers quickly reached the phone and dialed my home numbers; the analog signals followed blindly one after another through the wire and finally reached the recipient. The beep-beep sounds stopped when someone picked up

the phone. It was my mom! When I tried to hear closely, I heard noises on the other end: laughter, people's conversations, a loud stereo and dogs barking. To my great disappointment, my mom was busy attending to the visitors. She made me repeat some of my sentences several times. The next moment, the phone had already fallen into my father's hand. I could not believe that she had someone more important than me to attend to! My piteous appeal for attention soon became the burden of for my family members as they pushed the phone from one to another. The phone call finally ended in less than 15 minutes.

I felt excluded from my family; they were already used to my absence since I came to Brigham Young University Hawaii 17 months before, and they had forgotten that I was alone in anticipating the coming of Chinese New Year in a place that did not observe this celebration.

I was struck dumb for an hour until the phone broke the silence. It was my boyfriend again, but he let my mom talk to me. I was overwhelmed, and I felt that my disappointment was finally acknowledged by someone. My tears raced down my cheeks and formed droplets of water as they met my chin. My mouth was dry as a desert, and I could not speak. So I held the lump in my throat.

"Are you homesick?" my mom, asked.

"Yes." I cried even harder.

This phone call was another pathetically short one. Maybe she was hiding behind a door, sobbing and blowing her nose right now. Or maybe she did not know how to console me or to cheer me up. These questions were, of course, left unanswered. Worst ever, she did not call me back later that day to check on me. I was completely down. My heart sank to the bottom.

What a dreadful Chinese New Year I had this year! Wouldn't it be nice to be a daydreamer? How could I not indulge myself in meditation so as to fill in the emptiness of my heart during these very moments? My eyes stayed on the blank ceiling as I rested my body on that cold, hospital-like bed. My eyes now were best described as the eyes of as dead, looking into dead people which seem to look in a distance; they were still, dry and rigid. Despite the blank ceiling, which gave no consolation to my solitude, my mind gave way to daydreams and I immersed myself in fragments of memories. Once more, I sank back in to my wonderland. I bet those Americans who were not able to celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas with their family would understand my homesickness in this lonesome Chinese New Year.

the Halloween sea

Shem Greenwood

I walk beside the Halloween sea
And damsels dance backwards through quicksand and stars
Their banshee-laughter fills up the formless clouds above
The ocean overflows, the children delight
in escaping it.
The fires of strangers
The persistent friendship of an open wind
Patiently roars from everywhere
I am dead, content to be dead,
Happy to be full, soon happy
To be empty.

Hotcake Heaven

Larisa Schumann

My childhood summer vacations were happy times for me. Much of that time was spent eating with Banka, my grandfather. Waking up on a cool summer morning to the smell of bacon, hot cakes and eggs frying on the outdoor grill was heaven in my child's mind (and stomach). While he cooked, Banka would whistle or sing, old songs like "The Yellow Rose of Texas" and "You are My Sunshine." Often he twirled his spatula in his hands while watching the bubbles of his hotcakes burst, waiting for the perfect moment to flip them over.

As soon as I burst through the screen door to the backyard patio, he would wrap me up in his huge arms—squeeze—and then give me a wet kiss, right on the mouth. Then he would ask, "Rissy, how do you want your eggs?"

"Sunny side-up," I would say and scoot up to the picnic table.

All kinds of fixings were out on the table, put there by my grandmother (Grannin)—hot syrup, real butter, powdered sugar, and all kinds of homemade jam. There would be tomatoes, cantaloupe, and honeydew or Crenshaw melons from one of his many gardens. Sometimes there were raspberries, too. And there was always plenty of milk and homemade grape juice. Banka would hand me a plate with a huge stack of his hotcakes piled high. I would slather on the butter and the maple syrup and those hotcakes just melted in my mouth. As soon as my eggs were ready, he piled them on top of the stack. The golden yolks oozed all over, mixing in with the sweet stickiness of my hotcakes. The thick sliced bacon was crunchy and salty, a perfect counterpoint. And the melon slices dripped juice all over my chin. Heavenly.

Before I could finish my last bite, Banka would slip another stack of hot cakes and two more pieces of bacon onto my plate.

"But, Banka," I would protest, grabbing my stomach. "I can't eat anymore!"

He would chuckle, his belly shaking. "Sure you can! You're a big gal!"

Often, just to please him, I would. I did not mind too much. The heavenly taste of those hotcakes, soaked in maple syrup, was worth the pain of a too-full stomach.

Not only did Banka love to cook breakfast on the outdoor grill, but he would grill steaks and hamburgers out there for dinner. Grannin would spread a huge tablecloth on the large picnic table and cover it with salads, vegetables, potatoes, corn, and melons—until there was barely enough room for our plates. Banka ate quickly, while watching for us to clear a spot on our plates—then he'd slip us another burger or more potatoes before we could refuse. Growing up in a poor sheep-ranching family of 10 boys and two girls during the Great Depression, Banka was glad to have plenty of food on the table to feed his children and grandchildren. Those summer evenings, with my grandparents, uncles, brothers and sisters, and parents, were full of laughter as well as good food. We'd sit and eat, talk and laugh in the cool shade of the walnut tree, until the mosquitoes drove us indoors. Then Banka would watch sports or re-run episodes of M*A*S*H while I'd snuggle on the hide-a-bed with my sisters, watching him flip the channels and listening to him swear quietly at the TV. He often cracked and ate walnuts from their tree.

During the day, Banka worked in his gardens before going to his barbershop. When I was young, we visited him at his barbershop on Provo's Center Street. We liked to go there because he had a huge, old-fashioned soda pop machine. He'd let us have whatever we wanted; orange, grape, or root beer. Then we'd dip into the candy jar while Dad or one of my brothers got a haircut.

Going into the barbershop was like entering another world. Banka had two old-time, red vinyl chairs. Against one wall were a large sink and a counter full of drawers with all different sizes of scissors and combs. He also had a special vacuum for cleaning up and three different types of hand-held massagers for doing a customer's neck, head and shoulders after a cut.

The men who came and saw him were just as old as Banka and they talked about all kinds of things; politics, BYU sports, fishing, hunting, and reminisced about old times. Many times the discussions got heated, especially when a few customers came early and joined in. Many times Banka started yelling. But if he wanted to win the argument, he simply turned on the buzzer, letting the noise of the blades drown out his opponents.

Eventually I lived with my grandparents while at BYU. There was less time for eating and laughing on the backyard patio—I had friends to see and books to study. Summer changed to the fall, then winter.

But the food was still there. Banka got up early in the morning to make breakfast for me. Sometimes he made eggs, sometimes Dutch-oven potatoes, but most of the time oatmeal, with plenty of raisins and brown sugar. He'd have it all ready when I came into the kitchen ready to leave for class. He'd say, "There you go, Rissy. That'll warm you up!" He was right—it did.

Banka's Buckwheat Hotcakes

Sift together:

1-1/4 cups sifted whole-wheat flour

3 teaspoon baking powder

3 tablespoon brown sugar

³/₄ teaspoon salt

Combine:

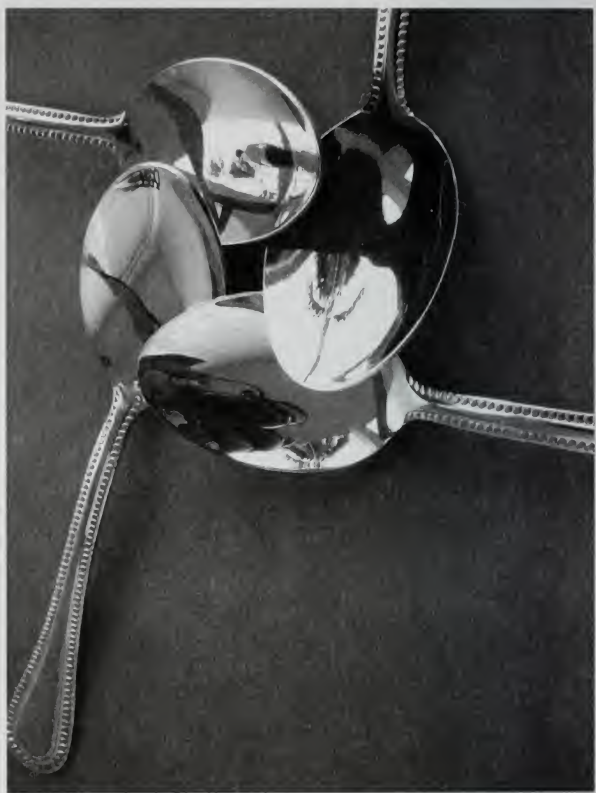
2 or 3 eggs, well beaten**

1-1/4 cups milk

3 tablespoon oil or melted shortening

Stir liquid mixture into flour mixture. Bake on griddle until golden brown and bubbles form on top, then turn. Or bake in waffle iron.

**To make lighter hotcakes, separate eggs and add only beaten egg yolks to the milk mixture. Beat egg whites until stiff and fold into butter just before baking.



Spoon Scenes

Arepera Peeni

Ethical Declaration

Zack Kopp

- I support big hugs and passionate kisses starting every day.
- I support breakfast.
- I support life changing explorations every day, even if only in the mind.
- I support filters in all of their forms and censors in none of theirs.
- I support bravery.
- I support courage.
- I support religion, which requires both bravery and courage.
- I support war.
- I support the peace that sometimes can only be found on the far side of that war.

- I support charity, and condemn laziness.
- I support helping hands.
- I support living life with the best intentions.
- I support turning intentions into actions.
- I support being supportive.
- I support searching with no intention of finding.
- I support curiosity and clumsiness, and their cousin – creativeness.
- I support leaders who lead based on what they believe to be right, not popular.
- I support hard work.
- I support running as long as it is towards something.

- I support love and the people willing to give love a chance.
- I support both the living and the dead who preserve and preserved the freedoms I enjoy.
- I support self-control.
- I support humility.
- I support pride.
- I support balance.
- I support laughing whenever the mood strikes.
- I support children being children but not being childish.
- I support the effort to never stop learning.

- I support inventions.
- I support taking action.
- I support Christmas, Easter, and any other holiday that celebrates Christ.
- I support nature.
- I support dreams bigger than what is achievable.
- I support achieving those dreams.
- I support morals that are never compromised.
- I support being who you really are, while you constantly strive to be what you want to be.
- I support perspectives being broadened, and never ending.
- I support America, and all of the principles that America was founded on.
- I support this list being submitted for anyone's approval but only care for my own.



Liquid Light
Merlin Wollenzien

Ghosts

Jacob Jackson

Ghosts don't bother me now the way they did when I was little. In my mind they've gone from transparent troublemakers to being mostly made up of normal phenomena we don't know how to deal with. You hear people's lame stories about a strange presence, seeing a light or hearing a sound that didn't make any sense, but I don't go for that stuff much. We've all got those stories and they mean next to nothing (I'll get to one of mine in a minute). The real weird feeling is where you expect someone to be there and they aren't; that's what a ghost really is. Every now and then you think you hear or see something weird and you say "OOO, it's a ghost haunting me!" No, it's not. Its lack, loneliness, the unfulfilled expectations of a creature that is social by nature. It isn't spirits that torment us on those dark cold nights; it's being alone that we are really afraid of. Why is a dead body frightening? Because it is the closest resemblance you can find to that other person being there without feeling any sort of companionship from them.

First off, a bogus ghost story...well, it's a true story, but my ghost turned out to be not so scary. This happened back when I lived with my parents. They own this creaky wooden house. It's the kind of place that can spook you every once in a while even if you don't scare easily. The room I was in was like a microphone for noises all over the rest of the house, so if someone was walking upstairs I knew it, but more often than not the noises I heard were not made by anyone at all. The wood expands and shrinks a little throughout the course of the day because of changes in temperature and it clicks and bumps all the time, especially at night. When the wind blows hard it makes a noise or two as well.

This night was a particularly gusty one and trees outside were wagging around and scratching the walls and windows. I had just fallen asleep and it was kind of late when a noise woke me up. Sometimes little noises don't mean anything, but once in a while they get under your skin and wiggle around. They make you stiffen up and pay close attention to where they're coming from; this was one of those. At

about the time I was telling myself it was nothing and floating back to sleep it came again. This was not one of the usual sounds the house makes; it was more like someone trying his best to speak through a mouth that couldn't quite form the words. I didn't move an inch, but you better believe that my senses were all focused on that noise. A sturdy gust shot at the house and that same noise swelled up at the same time as if seeping in through each little crack in the wood. It sounded like someone trying to scream the words "Help me," but all they could get out was "ellllp meeee" in a windy old voice that seemed like it was inside and outside the house at the same time.

I was still not quite convinced that the noise was a voice, but I was scared enough that moving even a little was not an option. The other four of my senses had surrendered priority to my ears and they were paying attention like never before. Clearly and unmistakable this time, a voice bled in from the ceiling and walls crying, "Help meeee!" My mind flipped through its files with jittery fingers trying all the possibilities of what might be saying "Help me." Of course the only file that I could pull up was a dingy manila folder that hadn't been opened since I was a little kid-the one marked "Ghost" in shaky letters.

As I was trying to figure out how I was going to get myself out of this situation, the moan came again: "Help me!" This time the tormented voice came louder and clearer than before and seemed to be coming from the darkest, dustiest corner of my closet. Right about this time I remembered a story I had read about a boy who had hung himself in a dorm closet at the local university. Supposedly, he still haunted that room. "Help me!" called the voice one more time, and I was certain that some poor old guy had hung himself there in that closet of mine before my folks had bought the house and was doomed to hang there for eternity.

In my mind I could clearly see that sallow black-eyed figure trying so hard to squeeze the words "Help me" through his stretched out neck cinched up tight in a cracked leather belt. There, without a doubt, dangling among my sweaters and church clothes. He called out again, more desperate than ever, "Helllp Meee!"

This was not a spooky movie, or a particularly good ghost story at a camp out; this was happening! It's a whole different kind of scary when it's the real deal. Trust me. I was unable to even run away. I lay there for some time trying to figure out what to do. The only idea that seemed to empower me was that perhaps I could help the thing in my closet. I forced myself to sit up, then to stand up. I stepped briskly over to the light switch and flipped it up with a clumsy hand. The light came on just the way it always did and my room looked normal

enough, but still there was the closet with its dark brown doors closed. I didn't really want to know what was in there, but I had no chance of sleeping again that night if I didn't have a look.

I stood for a moment and looked at the closet doors. I thought that I could hear the plastic hangers inside clicking around a little. With a quick, decisive motion I stepped forward and threw open the door, which screeched more than a little, and lo and behold (imagine a drum roll) hanging there on the bar were my clothes and nothing else: jeans, shirts, slacks, a suit I hadn't worn in years and neck ties, but no corpse hanging from a belt. No blue skin, no fat tongue filling the opened mouth that naturally sucked in vain for just a little more air, just old clothes gathering dust.

Where was my ghost? Had it floated upstairs to play its games with someone else? Had it shrunk back into the shadowy corners of my closet waiting for me to close the door and turn out the light again? At this point I was resolved to action and I didn't want to lose momentum so I looked through my closet a bit more. This earned me a sneeze or two but that's it. Finally I decided to go and see if my dad was awake and ask if he had heard anything.

Making my way up the steps I could hear the television being turned off and someone walking down the hall. I got to the top just in time to see a white figure walking into my folks' room. The most obvious conclusion under normal circumstances would have been that my dad, who regularly fell asleep watching TV, eventually woke up and went to bed. I had ghosts on the mind though and was sure that the white being that I had just seen was a specter and not my father. I walked quickly and nervously to my parents' room and must have startled my dad who was in fact just getting himself to bed after a long snooze on the couch with the boob tube on.

I pulled him out into the hall so as not to wake my mom and asked him if he had heard anything odd. He said "No" without thinking much, because what do you hear when you're sleeping? I told him that I was certain that I had heard a spooky voice calling for help, and how it kind of sounded like the person couldn't quite get the words out at first. He thought about it for no more than a second or two and then started laughing. I, just a little indignant, asked him what was so funny. He told me that he had just had a dream that he was a store clerk and some thieves were trying to get in after closing time. Says my dad, he didn't know what to do so he tried to call for help but in the dream he couldn't quite get the words out so he kept trying. Finally he did manage to yell it clearly enough, but at that moment the sound of his own voice woke him up. He was sleep talking and because the TV

room was directly above my room it sounded like his voice was coming from the closet. My ghost was just his bad dream mixed with a little imagination on my part. We both had a good laugh about it and went to bed. The silliest part is that I was still a bit jumpy that night even though I knew there was nothing scarier in the closet than my dusty old pin-striped suit.

I didn't have much notion of it back then but there are things in life far scarier than fake ghosts, and even worse than the real thing would be if such a thing is out there. One of these uber-spooky things for example is malignant cancer. My grandfather and my uncle both died of cancer so it was not all that surprising to find out that my dad had gotten it too, because it's partially genetic. My dad fought his cancer for almost six years, but his body finally gave out. While my dad was sick I would wake up in the middle of the night sobbing, most likely because I didn't cry much while I was awake. I guess my subconscious was trying to purge the emotion I didn't know how to acknowledge let alone deal with during conscious hours. Although some aspects of it illuminated the beautiful in life more clearly, most of the experiences attached to the weeks immediately before and after Dad died were intensely difficult. Foremost among these was dressing my father's body for the casket before his funeral.

I now know that a lot of folks allow the funeral home to take care of this for them, but we didn't. I had heard from people I know and trust that this last little service you give to your loved one can be a beautiful experience. I have wondered more than once if there's something wrong with me, like maybe I'm a wimp and a jerk because for me, dressing my dad's body was fiercely disturbing and basically just plain old spooky. Maybe it's a defect of my generation; we can't deal with death. We can see a simulation of it on TV several times a day if we feel like it, and watch an actor's interpretation of what it's like to be around a body, but in real life we stick the concept of death in our best hiding place and forget about it. Well at least I do, and lots of people I know are the same way. Most of the time we don't need to admit to ourselves that being exposed to so much fake death leaves us completely nude in the face of the frigid truth of the actual.

This fact hit me head on when my brothers and I walked through the door of the little chapel at the funeral home where my dad's nude body lay under a white sheet on what looked like an altar almost as if done up like an offering to a pagan god that I don't care to meet, but at the same time it wasn't. His eyes and mouth were glued shut and didn't look right at all. A guy I met in Mexico had a shrunken head that he let me hold once. Afterwards, I got the heebee jeebees every

time I thought about it for a month straight. There, under the florescent lights, Dad's face resembled that little Amazonian head more than his old living one. His neck drew a straight line from his shoulders to his head instead of the forward thrust that the living have. He was perfectly still. Generally we associate stillness with peacefulness, but he did not look peaceful to me...just dead.

All I really wanted to do was turn around, run away, get out and be anywhere but there. I wanted to tell myself, "This is just a movie, and that's just a plastic dummy" as I had in the theater a hundred times before. Even maybe let out a little laugh and say, "Oh come on! That's so fake!" which I do all the time during films. There I was though, with a bag of new clothes in which he was to be buried and Dad's body. Then there was the fact that my brothers were there too and none of us were gonna chicken out now.

The room was colder than your average air-conditioned chapel and smelled like a mix of formaldehyde and death. If you don't know what death smells like I don't know if you'll understand what I'm talking about...just imagine Father Time and regular life getting up in your face with some serious halitosis...no that's not really it; it's more like the every day life odor that you usually ignore turned up a few notches and standing on its head, making a weird face at you and it won't stop. As none of us boys knew how to dress a body, the funeral home manager assisted us. He was nice enough, but weird. He had no lips and his eyebrows made Spock's seem conservative. He picked up one of my dad's arms and explained that a body's joints stiffen up after a day or two as he roughly bent the elbow joint back and forth while looking at us with an indecipherable facial expression, and all the while Dad's hand is flopping around on its wrist in some pantomime of waving goodbye. He said you had to do this to "loosen up stubborn joints"...but actually Dad's body "wasn't that stiff." I tried to think of this as something normal and okay but it wasn't. This was Dad, but without all the attributes that made him Dad. His skin was cold and dry, and I tried not to look while we labored to get his underpants and trousers on over his feet. This was no small chore because his toes refused to point forward. His arms slid side to side as we rolled him back and forth laboring to get his shirt up around his shoulders. When we leaned him towards the side I was standing on, his right arm fell against my thigh. He had placed those strong hands of his on my head or shoulders countless times while he was alive; heavy hand on my head on Saturday morning saying "Hey, Bosco! How'd ya sleep?" I had held his hand in mine and tried to calm him when the pain medication caused him to hallucinate and scream "Help! Somebody please do

something! Oh why can't someone just do something?" In life his hands had meant love and comfort but while that wilted thing rubbed my leg all I could feel was nausea. I kept catching little whiffs of road kill and embalming fluid. You hold your breath when you drive by a fat, bloated dog on the side of the highway, but here we were putting Sunday best on our thin, broken father, and what should we have done or thought about that smell?

Our fingers faltered while we buttoned his shirt and we had to re-tie the neck tie a couple times. My hands were clumsy from all the shaking and I was a little frustrated with how the shoes wouldn't go on right so I got kind of rough with Dad's feet. This made his whole body wobble in a way that made me feel the same way I had felt the time we were dissecting cats in high school. I had wanted to act tough so I cut off a part of the kitty's ear with a scalpel. No one was impressed though, and instead of feeling brave, I felt like I might vomit. I'm no tougher now than I was then. Bryan, the oldest of the brothers came over and held Dad's swollen ankles while I got the shoes right. I was thankful to have him and Mike there to help. No one spoke much. We all avoided eye contact with each other. I caught a glimpse of Mike though and his eyes were those of a scared kid...this more than anything else made me feel better because at least I wasn't the only one.

We kept hearing a faint beep but no one said anything about it. Finally someone started to ask what it was but we all figured it out at the same time and everyone fell silent and tried to act like no one had noticed. When the decision was made to stop fighting the cancer and let it go on ahead and take its course, the doctors surgically implanted a pump to shoot morphine directly into Dad's spine. This was a more effective and less harmful method of dealing with the pain. Every month or so Dad would go in to have the pump refilled and if necessary he'd have the dosage increased. I guess when the pump runs out of pain killers it starts beeping to let you know it's time to get more. Well that's what was making the noise. That muffled beep was almost like Dad's weak little voice from years before saying "Help me," back when I had mistaken his sleep talking for a ghost, but there would be no waking up this time. Nor would we be able to laugh it off when we figured out the mistake. The noise took the emptiness, that vacuous quality of his limp body and gave it a voice. Deep down I felt that it was completely inappropriate to be creeped out by my dad (which we were), alive or not, and I guess everyone else felt the same because we all glanced nervously at each other and dropped the subject, but the machine in Dad's belly gave no heed to the delicacy of the situation and did not desist. I have wondered since then how long it took to

stop. Maybe it's still going now. We all got down to business at this point and finished as fast as we could. No one made any pretense at being cool anymore. We just wanted to get out.

For months afterward, I was hyper sensitive to the odor of dead animals and every bad smell reminded me of death. I would also wake up in the middle of the night with images of that body there in the frigid chapel; sleep dogged me after that and the nights got long. Even now I have a hard time looking at photographs of my father because my mind brings back the image of his thin sallow lips and his eyelashes that looked like sutures because of the adhesive that they had clumsily gooped on to keep his eyes from opening. Of course I feel completely guilty and useless about my inability to deal with all this in a mature and healthy way. I want to have the right attitude, but all I have is the truth. The thought of Dad's limp body overpowers my memory of his living self. And that beep in his embalmed belly was the scariest ghost I have ever encountered. Maybe these images will fade from my mind with time and I'll remember how he would talk or smile and shake his head a little when he was happy and proud instead of how empty his cheeks were and how round his ribs looked under that baggy white shirt. I hope so.



Phases

CJ Peterson

Wise One

by Nami Nitta

Once upon a time, a small village stood between an endless forest, thick as midnight and a flowing river, smooth as molten glass. The village was well known and respected for the abundance and quality of their fish. Each morning before the sun rose, the villagers threw out their nets and though there was barely any light, the nets never entangled; each villager in harmony with the other and with the fluctuations of the river. As the sun rose, it spilled over the horizon, setting the river ablaze like dry brush under a scorching desert sun. The nets were gathered, heavy with fish whose scales captured the morning flames. After gutting and cleaning their haul on the shore, the villagers laid the best of their catch at the foot of the forest as an offering to the Wise One. They never ventured far into the forest although it was neither cursed nor haunted. The forest was simply revered by the villagers with a devotion dating back to the very beginning of the world.

For many decades, the elders had told the story of the Wise One to the villagers. All the children in the village gathered around the central fire with excited sparks in their eyes. Logs were placed in the formation of a star, in the shallow pit made for the fire. At dusk the fire would be lit and come alive with the smell of wood; oak and pine, maple and mahogany. Then the elder would then begin, his ancient features like tree bark, deep, rich brown and grooved with wrinkles and understanding. With the lively spirit of a young chipmunk, the elder would tell the village's story, beginning to end. The tale would carry on the entire night and the children would sleep in until noon the next day, their dreams full of the tale just told.

Thus the decades passed, the daily habits and rituals of the village remained the same. Although the village remained constant, it existed beneath the shadow of the ever-changing forest. With the birth of each day, the sun lit a different montage of trees at the forest's edge. The villagers would hear the creaking of wood from deep within the heart of the forest and occasionally, the ancient rumbling of a tree speaking

drifted to them with the breeze. The leaves of the forest were always oscillating in color, whether it was just shades of green or the vibrant colors of fall. In winter, though the forest lost its intense foliage, the forest remained thick enough to stop the torrential mountain winds.

Those born in the village celebrated their coming of age by leaving their home and venturing into the forest. On such occasions, the dense heart of the forest would split and a path for just one individual would open. The path was different each time a villager went through, but all paths eventually led to the opposite edge of the forest. For a year, the young adult would travel the outside world, discovering its treasures and gaining a greater appreciation for his or her own life(?). Some would return starved and dirty, others would return well fed and strong. Not all returned alone, some brought their life mate and some brought those who lived in dire conditions to live there no more. At the return of each villager, there would be a grand celebration. The central fire would be lit and the villagers would dance and sing until midnight. Then the village elder would come to the edge of the fire and the noise would cease. Sitting with their loved ones, the villagers would all gather around the fire to hear for the legend of the Wise One.

When everyone was settled, the elder would begin, "Long ago, before the world was, the universe celebrated the marriage of the Ggoddess Sage to the Ggod Imbec. The consummation of their marriage was completed not by the birth of a child, but by the creation of the world. Sage gave Imbec a lock of her deep, ebony tresses and in return received one of his, so; blinding and so blond it neared a blinding white. They entwined their fingers, the tendrils of hair swirling in their palms and forming the sky above and the land below, a mixture of both light and dark.

Imbec created all things within the world, making life easy and free of any conflict. The land was fertile, greenery stretching as far as the eye could see. Trails were paved throughout the land and all creatures roamed freely with one another, the tiger with the deer, and the shark with the tuna. Large, terracotta pots filled with food lined one side of the trail and water was never absent in the pots on the other side. Life remained this way; the days were warm and the nights were cool and none struggled. 'Now,' Imbec pronounced, 'the world is perfect.'

However, being the Ggoddess of wisdom, Sage simply shook her head and gave her husband a small smile as she turned toward the world. The trails were covered, the limbs of trees stretching across the space to touch, vines encircling their trunks and weaving through the

newly sprouted hedges. The pots of food burst, up-heaving and splitting the land beneath and. bBits of ware stuck to plants and became fruit. The pots of water fell over and rolled downhill, some water spilled out as they rolled forming rivers, creaks, ponds and lakes. At the foot of the land, the pots collided spilling out the sea, the pieces of broken pottery forming islands. The land was no longer big enough and some creatures took to the sky, while others sought refuge in the sea. Sage created seasons so that all might know the passing of time. Then taking from the land that Imbec created and the sea that she created, Sage formed man, a mixture of wisdom and foolishness, new and old, water and earth. Life in the world would never be the same, but always varying from day to day, season to season. 'Now,' Sage whispered, 'the world can grow.'

Being the Ggod of all fools, Imbec was infuriated with Sage. She had destroyed the perfection of his world. Now, there would always be struggle and defeat. Too exasperated and rather lazy to change the world and failing to see the astuteness wisdom in the actions of his wife, Imbec disowned Sage and exiled her to life on the 'miserable' planet she created. Although he remained immortal, throughout his entire divinity, he never realized that struggle also brought victory and change brought progress. However, this story is not about him.

For a year, Sage wept, her sad tears flowing into the sea. At the end of the year, her mourning was finisheddone. She took on a different name and began to explore the wonders of this world. Although sShe had created what existed, she but had did not controlled the way theyings behaved. During the creation, she had not commanded the nightingale to sing or the lion to roar. She had not ordered the sloth, 'You are to be upright at all times.' Sage had simply instigated the formation of the new world, and each creature had adapted and evolved in its own way. She marveled at the behavior of everything from tiny armies of ants to the great tossing of the sea. She came to be known by the creatures of the world as, the Wise One. After wandering in curiosity and awe for millions of years and taking many forms, she finally decided to settle in a forest thick as midnight.

Thus, the story of this village and the goddess convergeintertwine. The first people to reside in this village were a couple, torn from their home by a devastating fire. The flames swallowed their tiny wooden hut. Hot, orange arms reached out to the couple as they watched their life burn too dull, gray ash and float away with the wind. The couple had walked blindly for several days, not caring about their lack of food and water. There was no place for them to settle and their throats grew parched from thirst. They had contented themselves with death, when

they reached the top of a hill and saw a sight unbelievable to their eyes. In front of them, Aa river as smooth as glass laid in front of them as it stretched to the horizon. The land was the shade of the crops before harvest, dark green with spots of bright color. The couple was so overjoyed that they failed to notice a forest looming below, so thick that the light of the sun was shutblocked out. At the foot of the hill, the trees towered over them as they stood, defeated beneath its shadow. There was no way around the nearly solid mass of foliage and definitely no way through. The wife's spirit broke down, and she sank into her knees and wailing in frustration. The man tried to uplift her but it was of no use and he sank to his knees beside her.

Within the forest the trees creaked with news of the travelers. One tree quaked with particular vigor beneath a sleeping immortal and shook her awake. Wondering about the commotion she turned into a vine and climbed through the forest, wrapping herself on a branch directly right above the couple. They were so caked in soot and mud that the only clean place on the woman's face was the path her tears had traced. Feeling pity for the couple, the immortal opened her home, for she saw that they had traveled far and suffered much and their hearts were pure. Before their very eyes, the couple saw the trees separate to forming a wide, open trail. At first, the couple looked warily at the path before them, but decided it was a gift from the gods and began their journey. The trees trembled with excitement. Millennia had passed since man-people had come to this place. The trees knew that these people were good or else they would never have let them pass through. The immortal followed the couple through their journey, first as a leaf, then a vine, then a curious limb.

Finally, the couple reached the end of the trail. Sunlight filled their eyes and they stood, speechless at the landscape. Beneath them, the ground was covered in soft grass, the color of the first shoots of spring. The land stretched for one hundred yards, then met with a river clear and sweet as morning dew. The river was so long it stretched until it almost met the horizon, and so wide that the other side was barely visible. This time the couple sank to their knees for a different reason and thanked the gods for their tremendous gift.

The couple built a small hut and lived happily, constantly giving thanks and homage to the forest. Then at sunset on the first day of the new moon, the couple was sitting near their fire, speaking in hushed tones. The day had passed by slowly, and both of them felt the approach of something momentous. The last rays of the sun disappeared beneath the horizon and the sky was dark, no moon shone tonight. The couple stopped speaking and the forest was silent. Even

the wind seemed stilled in its path. As the couple looked on, the silhouette of a woman glided out of the trunk of the offering tree. The movements of the woman were graceful, and there was an unmistakable dignity in her posture. Her hair blended and stretched forth with the night, but her eyes were turquoise, shifting in their color like the sea. The couple made room for her near the fire and she sat, her back straight, her eyes kind. She began to tell them a story, her story. 'I am the Wise One...' she began, her voice as ancient and flowing as the river. Her tale swept into the night, enchanting its listeners and then it was done. When she finished, she left without another word, blending into the wind."

Hundreds of years passed, but those in the village never forgot their origin and the kindness of the Wise One. So, at each harvest and each haul, the best of the gathering were offered to the forest as a sign of respect and homage. And at every new moon following a villager's return from the outside world, when no light shone from the sky and the wind was a mere whisper, the entire village would huddle near the central fire and wait for the Wise One to come. When the leaves stopped rustling and the skittering of night creatures would cease, the villagers would turn to the forest. From the trunk of the offering tree, she would come and it seemed as if the trees moved and bowed as the Wise One walked beneath their boughs. The villagers made room near the fire and transfixed themselves on her as she gracefully strode to meet them. She sat on a grass-covered stone that was made especially for this night and with a sparkle in her turquoise eyes she would begin, in a voice as ancient as the forest, "I am the Wise One..."

My Math Anxiety

Jared Zane Kessie

A fraction of my life has been divided by the time I spent
Reducing all the hatred towards this class.
Applying all the positives to cancel out the negatives,
Using absolute power just to pass.

My solution may seem radical for the combinations to equal
As I calculate the options in my mind.
The mode by which I'm learning here minused hope and added fear
The inverse variation I will find.

The root has been identified, yet the intensity has been multiplied
Alas, my plan to improve has just been foiled.
My theorems now have just been slowed, exponentially the hatred grows
I must start over now with fervence doubled.

Professors seem so unaware, they write down cubed instead of squared
And blame us for the outcome when it's wrong.
The derivative of all this pride is hidden somewhere deep inside
Indeed from teaching these math classes for too long.

You may state this is imaginary. Can a math class truly be this scary?
And I argue yes the numbers they do add up.
I have tried to find some common ground, but the denominators ne'er to be found
So down with mathematics, enough's enough.



Untitled

Cassandra Temple

My Brother, the Keeper

Sariah Yoder

The snow crunches under my feet and I walk with my hands wrapped up in my hooded sweatshirt. Somehow the five blocks to his house seem to take longer the colder it gets. I try not to, but can't help but think back on how nice it was to have sand under my feet rather than this unfriendly hard-packed snow.

Finally, I'm at his door and I walk into the small apartment without knocking. There he is, with his scruffy guitar in hand, slouched across what he calls "the sloth" - an oversized wrap-around couch with no legs, upholstered in a fabric that dates back to the early 70's. Again, he's plucking out the same tune he's been practicing for three months.

No improvement though. He looks up at me and his eyes barely acknowledge my entrance.

"Hey," he says as he repeats the song again.

I ask him if he's had dinner and he answers by asking me if three dollars is a good price for a box of frozen corn dogs.

"Mom's gonna be disappointed that I haven't changed your eating habits a bit," I reply.

My brother shows off the new stains on his pants, proud of a long day working on a grounds maintenance crew. I ask him if he wants me to take them over to my place to wash and he says, "Heck no, I can get at least another week's wear outta these babies before they go anywhere near some soap." Another attempt to civilize turns up futile.

Before I can ask him what he wants to do tonight, my brother tosses his guitar across the couch, and reaches for his favorite football. Gripping it, then tossing it between his hands, he rattles off the football games that will be shown on TV that night and the corresponding stats of each team. Immediately my mouth turns down, and I try not to roll my eyes. Sensing my upcoming reluctance to join him, he asks me what my roommates are up to. I feel like this is the same conversation we had last night, and the night before that, and the night before that...

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When I moved back to Provo, Utah, I knew I was going to feel suffocated by what I consider a busy, impersonal college town. I tried to look on the bright side and take advantage of all the opportunities to meet new people and participate in unique events. Besides, I wasn't only coming here to go to school. The youngest child in our family had just graduated from high school and was leaving the small town we grew up in to work in Utah for a year. Though he is six years younger, my brother and I have always had a particularly close relationship and for that reason, my mother tells me, "You're the only one he'll listen to." Even though I was looking forward to spending time with him, being back in Provo and away from where I felt more at home was not easy.

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The waves wash over my feet on a breezy Sunday afternoon as I walk across the sand near my apartment. I stop and watch my feet sink into the saturated sand as the water rises over them and flows back to the unsettled ocean.

"So how is life in Hawaii?" my mom asks as we have our weekly check-in chat. I try to explain what it was like trying to learn Tahitian dancing yesterday, and how one of my professors actually called me by name when I ran into him at the grocery store. It is a welcome phenomenon I never imagined at my previous school.

She asks me if I've decided yet whether I will return to study in Utah. Tired of discussing the pros and cons, I respond by telling her I'm still not sure. I cringe as I say the words. I look around and know that I really have made a choice. The gentle breeze and lulling waves seem to assure me that I've made the right decision.

"You know, I'm worried about your brother. He's been having kind of a rough time lately. I really don't know what's going to happen when he gets out to Utah."

I think back on the disheartening news we received a few months earlier that the youngest sibling in our family of nine children was the first and only one who had not been admitted to BYU Provo straight out of high school, including my parents. I knew it could be enough to leave him feeling dejected and detached from the family. Without admission, money, or enough determination to attend college, my little

brother had decided to move to Utah for a year to look for work and explore life.

My mother continues, "I know you are considering staying there, and you need to do what you feel is right, but it would be so good to have you in Utah with your brother."

As she speaks these words, I feel a pit in my stomach. I have been pushing out of my mind the feeling of responsibility that I should go back to be with my brother. I am making a home in Hawaii, and my intention of going back to Utah, though I am almost finished with school there, is fading quickly.

As my Mother expresses her worry, the sand slips beneath me, and I feel a new path forging ahead, paved with a mother's plea and a sibling's need.

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First task: Get him a job. After their long drive from our home in Upstate New York to the Mountains of Utah, my mom, sister, and brother emerge from our old van and less than three hours later we are checking the job postings at all the nearby businesses. Within a week, my brother is less than happily, but (I remind him) financially stable with a job at the local grocery store.

I, on the other hand, have had more difficulty than ever finding employment. Finally I resort to the job that no one else on campus wants: working in the hidden dungeon of the campus cafeteria as a bakery worker. Not only does the job include the expected hair net requirement and threats of being burned by the oven, but the only shift still available starts at 4 o'clock in the morning. I'll take it.

As the older, experienced sibling, I remind my brother to keep a good record of his finances, and to make sure he makes a good impression at his job. I know this is what my mom expects from me, and I feel like maybe my brother can avoid some of my past mistakes if I wisely guide him.

The first few weeks of work for both my brother and me are discouraging. We cure our disappointment by competing with stories about our strange job duties and co-workers as the day comes to a close and we slouch on my living room sofas.

"Provo's really a different place at 4 in the morning," I tell him. "Yesterday as I was walking to work in the dark, this old scruffy guy was weaving through the street beside me on a squeaky bike singing at the top of his lungs." Normally it would have made me laugh but I

almost wet my pants that morning as I walked briskly through the shadows.

The next morning I wake up, sneak out the front door again, and my little brother is lying on my doorstep stairs in the dark, waiting to walk me to the bakery. He is there every day for the next month and a half, until finally I have a job that lets me see the sun rise.

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Walking down the sidewalk near my apartment, I kick the drifts of crispy leaves that have built up beside the pathway. The semester is well underway and I am finally feeling in control of my class and work schedule. In the past week, I have experienced the unwelcome but typical rejection of young adult dating. My head hangs low as I think about a dear relationship that has come to a close and my disappointment causes me to reflect on the tumultuous world of romance and relationships.

That afternoon, my brother accompanies me to the giant library on campus where I need to pick up a few books for my research paper. I bring him with me frequently as I study, thinking that the experience on campus and my example will inspire him to increase his education, if not at least pull him away from the tentacles of his TV.

As we wind our way through the bustling students and squeeze into the automatic doors leading to the entryway of the library, I share some of my thoughts with my brother.

"I wonder if I'm too independent for a girl."

"What?" my brother looks at me with his eyes wide and his brow crooked. He has no idea where this came from.

"I mean, sometimes it seems like maybe I'm too outspoken and I scare guys away." I try to explain what I know he can't understand, with the hope that he will somehow magically know what I can do to end the disappointment I feel.

"I can't believe you just said that," he says. "Do you hear yourself? You sound just like the kind of girls you always say you can't stand - the ones that are constantly worrying about what guys think about them." His voice increases in volume and we move through the corridor past all the surrounding students.

"I mean, you're gonna get married, okay? Just stop worrying about it so much. If you're not married yet, you're not supposed to be, okay?"

I want to melt away from the stares his words just drew, and at the same time, I want to stop in my tracks and hug him hard. Somehow he knew what I was really worried about. Even though I feel my

cheeks reddening at the fact that I was just corrected by my more logical and much younger little brother, I am so grateful for his words that tell me he likes me just the way I am, and reassure me that things will work out.

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"Football fanatic" just doesn't suffice. I need to come up with a term specially created for my brother, whose entire week is ruined (as well as whomever is in his company) when one of his favorite football teams is trampled by their opponent.

Before he even arrives in Utah, my brother notifies me that he will be at every BYU Football home game. Having been through three BYU Football seasons already, the excitement has worn off for me and until I hear my brother's words, the idea of going to another four-hour game in the over-crowded, too-hot or too-cold, deafeningly loud stadium has not crossed my mind.

For the first time ever, I am grateful for my lack of money which provides an adequate excuse as to why I will be unable to purchase the \$85 season pass. I express my insincere condolences to my brother and tell him I won't be able to purchase the tickets.

Later, our older brother overhears our conversation and offers to buy me the tickets as an early Christmas present. Thinking of all the gifts I would rather have for Christmas, I reluctantly accept his offer and brace myself for a season of six games: a total of at least 24 dismal hours in the massive, inhospitable football stadium.

Five home games and two months later, my brother and I are at BYU's last home football game. My brother is eagerly anticipating a win, and I am regretting that I forgot to bring some ear plugs. At half time, my brother sends me with his money to get some popcorn, "or whatever I want." I walk out and look back at him. His teeth are clenched, his frustrated fingers are gripping his short hair and he can't pull his eyes away from the play on the field. I smile and turn, thinking that if he can just re-direct his passion from football to his future family, maybe all this fervor of his could actually be valuable.

The stadium erupts in cheering and I return to my brother's side with a tub of popcorn in arm. I can see the excitement on his face and he puts his arm around me for the first time I can remember.

"You just missed the best play of the game!" he says, "get this, number 6 just broke away and ran down..."

Being in that stadium of chaos earned its worth at that moment as I stand next to my little brother and feel his arm around me.

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Many psychologists believe that personality is largely determined by our birth order. Numerous studies have been conducted that trace patterns of the oldest, middle, and youngest children in families. Correlations are found in how they interact, their personality traits, and their success later in life. Often the youngest child is believed to be immature and irresponsible. Many studies report that since the youngest child is pampered by parents and older siblings, they are cared for as “the baby” and come to expect special treatment, sometimes refusing to take responsibility and assume leadership later in life.

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Sitting in front of the ocean again, I dig my heels into the sand and try to keep my pages steady from the wind as I write. Down in the waves, seven tanned boys play a casual game of football, yelling and jumping into the rising water.

I feel myself smile and realize I’m thinking of my brother again. Yesterday he called just to tell me he can now bench 275 pounds. He says he was approached at work by a Utah State Football League coach and encouraged to try out for a team. Then he tells me his plan. “I think I might go to a Community College here after I get back from my mission, and see about playing football.” Then he adds, “But I’ll have to see how things work out.”

My brother’s never been to an island. He’s never been off the mainland. He’s never been to college. I remember being here six months ago and deciding to go back to be a supportive older sister, to help my brother get a good start on his own. I never thought of myself needing support. I never saw my brother as my keeper.

The water flows up to my feet and I wonder if he’s sitting on the old couch playing his guitar right now.



## Lava Rock

*Megan Pitt*

## Thin

*Starlyn Wiley*

Robert Sanders reached into the pocket of his worn out Wrangler jeans with frayed edges and the beginnings of holes that would soon expose his knees. He worked on the assembly line at the local car factory, the only business that kept the small, Midwestern town of Mercy alive. He spent eight hours a day attaching a series of seven bolts to each car as it made its progress towards its birth down the moving line to station 15, where he worked. Jack, Ed, and Paul, his best friends from the days of water balloon fights and paper airplane contests, worked there too, all struggling to make a living and to find a reason to keep returning to their stations each morning.

During his fifth grade career day, Jack, Ed, and Paul beamed as they drew pictures of themselves holding machinery and tools next to the large conveyer belt, just as they had seen on their field trip to the car factory three weeks earlier. Robert drew himself wearing a black pinstripe suit and a red tie. They laughed at him then. No one was laughing now.

"I'm going to be a business man when I grow up and make lots of money and leave this stupid town" he had promised his friends, not knowing his drawing once proudly displayed on the family refrigerator would eventually fall and get lost in the consuming crack between the refrigerator and the counter.

Robert opened the creaking door of 57 Gessell Street, gray peeling paint, a broken doorbell, and took the same five steps that he took every morning and night with his cold navy blue lunchbox in his left hand and the keys to his green Chevy pickup truck in his right, and sat down in his brown LazeBoy recliner while releasing a long familiar sigh. His chair was like the chair his father had sat in when he was alive.

Robert slowly untied the laces on his black work boots with tough, strong hands still covered in dark smudges of oil even though he had

washed them twice before he drove home from the factory. His wife's dirty running shoes caught his eye. They were the ones she wore as she jogged at 5:10 in the morning, Monday through Saturday.

On a small, nicked end table next to her shoes were three wilted red roses in a pink vase that he had given to her three days earlier. Wrinkled brown petals were scattered on the table and a few on the floor as if they would rather lie next to her shoes. He sighed, shook his head, and reached for the TV remote. He stared at the blank 14 inch screen. He placed his hand on what he thought was the remote only to discover his wife's diary. It was a lemon meringue pie sort of yellow with blue cursive words on the cover. Tempted as he was to open it, he would not, he could not, he should not. Instead he just held it in his callused and rough hands, running his index finger over its smooth cover, letting his mind wander.

He recalled the box he had under their full size bed. Robert would open the box when he was alone while his wife was at her fitness club meetings on Thursday nights from 7:00 to 9:30 pm. He had saved the ticket stubs from their first date at the Cinerama, the town's dollar theater, Godzilla verses Mothra. She liked the movie and they had laughed about it as they sat on a handmade quilt in the middle of the driveway of 57 Gessell Street, eating the homemade chocolate chip raisin cookies his mother had made.

The box preserved other memories. The blue and orange waterproof watch that broke just 3 weeks after she gave it to him for his birthday eight years ago, the hot pink shoe laces she wore on her Keds the year they got married, a program from the Christmas pageant they had participated in when he was eighteen and she was sixteen. She played the lead role. There were school pictures, a prom glass that had contained sparkling cider, the key to the rusted car they drove for three years before they inherited his father's truck, even the sterling silver promise ring he had saved up for, working overtime at the factory when he knew that she was the one. She lost it after he had proposed to her and he happened to find it seven months ago when he was moving a dresser to make room for the oval full length standing mirror with pinewood edging that she bought from Kmart for \$34.65.

Remembering made him long to hold her as he used to before she joined the fitness club and before the yoga classes and aerobics classes and morning jogs and workouts at the small gym Monday, Wednesday, Friday. He longed to run his fingers through her dark brown hair, which used to curl near the bottom. When they met, she had hair down to her waist. Six years after they married, she cut it to her shoul-

ders. The curl was gone. By their ten year anniversary, she had cut it so it flipped in towards her chin, framing her round face.

As he sat with the diary, Robert remembered his morning. Instead of waking up as the morning sunlight slipped between the blinds of their bedroom window as he used to when they were trying to get pregnant, he remembered that this morning she had left to go jogging before the sunlight ever reached their window, just like so many mornings over the past six months. More than anything he wanted to open the diary and read what was inside. He hoped that this would let him see inside her as he once had during the first years of their marriage, when they would look through books of baby names and make plans.

Robert's eyes returned to the diary. "I can't," he whispered to himself, but his fingers inched towards the corner of the cover, and then stopped. He stared at that creamy yellow cover and those blue, cursive words that began to scream at him. Just then his fingers flipped open the cover, his eyes fixed on the page as if nothing else was in the room. They would have stayed focused on that page except for the sound of keys approaching the door of 57 Gessell Street. His wife was home from her yoga class. He glanced at the door, the page, and the door again.

The page was blank. There was nothing there.

"Nothing worth writing about," he mumbled to himself as he put the diary back where he had found it just three minutes ago. He turned on the TV to channel 15. Sports was on.



## Untitled

*Cody Easterbrook*

## Solving Problems

*Lori-Ann Isom*

It is given that:

In 2005, 25.8 million people in sub-Saharan Africa were living with AIDS  
And approximately 3.1 million new cases were reported.

In 2004, 2.4 million people in the region died from the disease  
and, from 1999 to 2004, AIDS deaths there increased by 800%.

In some sub-Saharan countries, as much as 38% of the adult population  
is HIV positive  
and babies born with AIDS live for approximately 4 years.

Some 12 million sub-Saharan children have been orphaned by the disease  
and that number is expected to rise to as much as 25 million by 2010.

Let  $x$  = people living in sub-Saharan Africa

Let  $y$  = people living in developed nations.

Write an equation and solve for Why.

**Solution:** The value of  $x$  must be equal to the value of  $y$ .













